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AN
HUMBLE ATTEMPT
TO ASCERTAIN THE
SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF THE
FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

IN THREE DISCOURSES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

“THE AWAKENER,”

DELIVERED IN

THE MONTHS OF JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1819,

BEFORE THE

FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

IN WEYMOUTH.

BY THEIR PASTOR,

JACOB NORTON, A. M.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

“Through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father.”—BIBLE.

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1819.

THE FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY IN WEYMOUTH.

MY BELOVED PEOPLE,

THE following discourses* on the character of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, are the result of diligent inquiry and careful investigation. They were composed and delivered, and now by request are made public, not only from a conviction of the truth and importance of the sentiments they contain, but of their pertinency to the state and operation of things in this vicinity.

That you will read them with that interest and candour, with which you heard them delivered; that they may be happily instrumental of bringing you "with all readiness of mind to search the scriptures daily whether these things are so;" that they may, through the blessing of the God of truth, of love, and of peace, contribute to the promotion of pure and undefiled religion; to "the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"—is the heart's desire, and prayer to God of your affectionate, obliged, and grateful pastor,

JACOB NORTON.

* They were composed and delivered as six distinct discourses.

SERMON I.

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF THE

FATHER.

JOHN, 17, 3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

POLYTHEISM, or the belief and worship of a plurality of Gods, early obtained in the world. To this error the Israelites, the chosen and highly favoured people of God, early discovered a strong propensity, and even degenerated into idolatrous practices. To strike at the root of this pernicious evil, the laws and institutions which God gave them, were wisely adapted.

The first and fundamental article of the Jewish religion, is the *unity of God*. This article, in the most decisive and unequivocal manner, teaches, that there is but *One* self-existent Being, independently and infinitely perfect, whose name alone is Jehovah, and who only is the object of supreme worship to his intelligent creation.

The unity of God as taught by revelation, may, it is believed, be satisfactorily inferred from the *light of nature*, whose works and operations, so far as we are acquainted with them, seem to indicate both unity of design, and the existence of one, and but one almighty and infinitely wise Being, as the Creator and Governor of all.

The same general laws of motion, and the regular phenomena of nature, cannot easily be reconciled with the supposition that the universe is governed by two or more co-ordinate Powers or Beings.

That the universe should be produced, sustained and governed by more than one infinitely wise and perfect Being, does not seem consistent with the dictates of na-

blasted and enlightened reason, as one such Being must be equally competent to the production, support, and government of all things as two, or a greater number.

As the existence of more than one such Being would, so far as we can conceive, be superfluous, it is not reasonable to admit the existence of more than one. Besides, is it not in the highest degree probable, if not certain, that the existence of more than one supreme and infinitely perfect Being is inadmissible, as an *absolute impossibility*?

That we may learn from the light of nature that there is one Supreme Being, and but one only, we are assured by the declaration of an inspired apostle. "The invisible things of HIM from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even HIS eternal power and Godhead."

Were there more than one eternal and infinitely perfect Being, may we not reasonably suppose that we should have clear and full evidence of the important fact? But as no evidence of this is exhibited in any part of the visible constitution of nature, must not the supposition that more than one such Being exists, be rejected as extravagant and unfounded?

But strong and effectual is the propensity in men to become vain in their imaginations, and so darkened in relation to their foolish hearts as to "change the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator," and even to multiply objects of religious worship. From this consideration, and to preserve his worship from corruption, and the impurity of polytheism, the all holy and jealous God has clearly revealed, in the Old Testament scriptures, the unity of his Being or Godhead.

With equal clearness he has been pleased to reveal this great and fundamental doctrine, in the scriptures of the New Testament. Jesus Christ, who came into the world to do the will, speak the word, and inculcate the doctrine of his Father, hath assured us, that the "*first* of all his commandments is, 'hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE LORD.'"

Not only do these scriptures teach us that "there is one God," but that there is also "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

To understand and suitably improve these truths, are in the highest degree important. The passage of our text seems to teach us that this is necessary to eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." This is the declaration of Jesus Christ himself, who is the TRUTH. It is therefore worthy of all acceptance.

This is life eternal—The way to obtain eternal life is, that they (the many whom the Father had given to Christ) might know thee the only true God. To know God, as the terms are here used, is equivalent to acknowledge and worship him as the only true God. To obtain eternal life we must believe and acknowledge that He, and He alone, is the self-existent, unoriginated, the Supreme Maker, Governor and Judge of the world; that all worship and obedience are, in the highest sense, due to him, and practically regard his will or commands.

And Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. To know Jesus Christ is also the way to eternal life; because by knowing him, we know the will of God who sent him: for he hath given unto us the words which God gave unto him. These two points, viz. to know or believe him, who is the Father of Jesus Christ, to be the only true God, and Jesus Christ to be the Messiah, are the foundation of christianity. Independent of these, the christian religion cannot stand. But these being admitted, the other tenets of christianity cannot reasonably be questioned.

Viewed in this light, these propositions appear in the highest degree interesting and important. They claim our most serious attention, unwavering faith, and correspondent regard.—To illustrate and establish the truths which they contain, will be my humble attempt.

The propositions may be thus stated—

I. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is alone the true God.

II. Jesus Christ is not the true God; but inferior to him.

First. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is alone the true God. That there is but one true God, is a fact

acknowledged by christians, generally, of every sect and denomination. Many christians, however, do not admit that the *Father* of Jesus Christ is *alone* the one true God. They believe and earnestly contend that the one true God consists of three distinct co-ordinate persons, or that three distinct persons, equal in power and glory, constitute the one God. This article of their faith they endeavour to support by scriptural evidence. But the evidence which they produce in its support must be essentially defective, and indeed of no force, if it be true that God is but *one person*, and that this person is the *Father* of Jesus Christ. What then is truth in relation to this momentous subject? Does the Bible decide the question? This is admitted. Must it not also be admitted that the *whole* of Bible testimony, rightly understood, goes to *support* the proposition that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is alone the true God, or to the *subversion* of it? It is surely unreasonable, and a high reproach of the Bible, to suppose that it gives testimony both *for*, and *against* the truth of the proposition. Should such testimony then be produced from the Bible in support of the truth of the proposition, as shall appear to the candid and unprejudiced mind clear and decisive, is it not reasonable to infer, that whatever proof may be produced to invalidate the truth of the proposition, must be *entirely seeming and not real*?

Is Bible testimony then clear and decisive in proof that the Father of Jesus Christ is *alone* the true God? You will decide, my hearers, for yourselves, in view of the testimony now to be produced.

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one Lord*." Deut. 6, 4. "There is none good but *one*, that is God." Matt. 23, 17. The first of all the commandments is, "hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one Lord*." Mark 12, 29. "It is *one God*, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." Rom. 3, 30. "There is none other God but *one*." 1 Cor. 8, 4. "There is *one God*, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 2, 5. "Thou believest that there is *one God*; thou doest well." James 2, 19.

These texts so clearly express the unity of God, that no doubt, it should seem, can reasonably exist as to the truth of the doctrine. Who then is this one God, but the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? He is the one God in *distinction* from the one mediator Christ Jesus. But if the *Father* is God alone in *distinction* from *Christ* the mediator, must not the supposition that Christ is a part of God, or one of the supposed persons in the Godhead, be rejected as inadmissible? Instead of intimating a plurality of persons or agents in God, the passages above quoted seem clearly to intimate that he is but *one person* or *agent*. Were there three persons in God, or were God three distinct persons, is it not unaccountable that when one of these supposed persons quoted Deut. 6, 4, "the Lord our God is one Lord," he did not so much as intimate that a plurality of persons existed in, or made up the Being of God, and that he was himself one of the persons? As he speaks of the unity of God as the first of all the commandments, as a doctrine of the highest importance, is it not reasonable to suppose, that if this unity implies plurality of persons, he would at least have given some intimation of it? When he said, there is none good but one, that is God, are we to infer that he meant to say, or insinuate, that, by the term *God*, he meant *himself*, or that the term *included* himself? Can this construction be put upon his words without doing them great violence and injustice? Is not this the plain meaning of his words?—"No being, person, or agent, is supremely and independently good but one, who is God, *my Father*." Agreeably we are assured, that "to us (christians) there is but *one God, the Father*." But if the *person* of the Father is *the one God*, or constitutes the one God, does it not necessarily follow, that a *plurality of persons* do not constitute the one God? Must it not then be "*well*" to believe in one supreme God, and that this one God is the person of the Father?

If it may reasonably be inferred from the above quoted texts that God is one simple uncompounded Being, the following class of texts seems fully to justify and support the inference.

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bond."

age." "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." Ex. 20, 2, 3. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." Ps. 65, 2. "Thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, who alone art the Most High over all the earth." Ps. 83, 18. "Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no God; I know not any." Is. 44, 8. "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me." Deut. 32, 39. "The Lord he is God; there is none else besides him." Deut. 4, 35. "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself." Deut. 7, 6.

As the personal pronouns in these passages are singular as to number, can it reasonably be questioned that the Being who uses them, or with reference to whom they are used, is singular, or single as to person or existence? Who then is the being who uses these singular pronouns, or with reference to whom they are used, but the one God, *the Father*! Must they not then be used with *exclusive* reference to him, designating him alone to be the true God? If this be not the case, is it not difficult to conceive any words or expressions that could clearly teach and establish the Divine Unity, or that God is one simple uncompounded Person or Being?

Not only in the above passages are the singular pronouns used, by and with reference to the person of God the Father, denoting him to be but one God or person, but such, and to the same purpose, is the use of them *almost invariably* in the sacred volume. Can this fact be reconciled with the supposition that a plurality of distinct persons, or intelligent agents, exists in, or constitute one God?

It is a fact, indeed, of frequent occurrence, especially in the nations of the East, that an *individual person* in speaking of himself uses the plural pronoun, *we, our, us*. This majestic style we find used by king Rehoboam, and by the apostle Paul. But is it a fact that *two or more persons* in speaking of, or in reference to themselves, ever use the singular pronoun, *I, me, mine*? Or does an individual person, when speaking of, or in reference to himself and other persons, connectedly, ever use the singular pronoun? Were there three dis-

inct and co-equal persons then in God, might we not reasonably conclude, that, in speaking of himself as consisting of these *three*, he would *invariably* use the plural pronoun, *We, Our, Us*? But as he uses the singular pronoun almost invariably, does not the inference, that he is but one person, or compounded being, seem unavoidable?

It may be worthy of notice in this place, that the word used for God in the Hebrew, is sometimes plural in its termination. This circumstance is considered by some as furnishing an argument in favour of the idea that God consists of a plurality of persons. But when it is considered that in all languages there are words of a plural termination which have a singular signification—that in the Septuagint, Vulgate and other ancient versions of the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for God is always translated in the singular, and that it is applied to Moses and to other individuals, the evidence which it may be supposed to afford in favour of a plurality of persons in God, must appear to possess little if any weight. This, John Calvin, and some of the most learned trinitarian writers, have candidly acknowledged.

Permit me now to solicit your attention to a class of Scripture texts, which *directly* assert the *supremacy of God in the person of the Father*, or, that *the person of the Father is the one God*.

That the texts which I have already produced in proof of the unity of God have exclusive reference to the Father, is, in the highest degree, probable; it is believed certain. But as this may be disputed, let the question, whether the Father alone is the true God, be decided by the following passages.

Unto us there is but one God, *the Father*, of whom are all things. 1 Cor. 8. 6. One God and *Father of all*, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Eph. 4. 6. It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons which *the Father hath put in his own power*. Acts 1. 7. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but *the Father only*. Math. 24. 26. Mark 13. 32.

You are not insensible, my brethren, as I just now suggested, that the belief of many is, that God is three co-equal persons, or that three co-equal persons constitute one God, and that one of these persons is the Father. This doctrine the "Assembly's shorter Catechism" taught us to believe from our early youth, in the answer to the question, "how many persons are there in the Godhead?"—"There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory."

Were these, my brethren, the words of Scripture, "the words of God, the words of the Holy Spirit, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ," we ought to receive them as "wholesome words, sound words, sound speech, which cannot be condemned." But need I remind you that they are not the words or speech of Scripture, and therefore that they have no claim to our peculiar respect and reverence? Were the doctrine contained in these words, expressly taught in the Bible, or were the doctrine fairly deducible from any Bible words or representations, we ought to admit and acknowledge its truth, however unintelligible it may seem, without hesitation, and with the profoundest reverence. But is this strange and mysterious doctrine contained in the inspired volume? If so, what are we to understand by the passages under consideration? If *the person of Father*, of whom are all things, *is the one God*, can it be true that the *one God* consists of *three persons*? If the *Father alone* hath put the times, or seasons in his *own power*, or reserved them to *himself*, can they be in the power of *two other persons*? Or can the two other supposed persons, be equal to the Father in power and glory? If no man, *no one*, no angel, not even *the Son*, knows when a future event (generally supposed the final judgment,) will happen, but *the Father only*, can it reasonably be supposed that the Son, and another supposed person, *do* know when that event will happen, and are therefore equal to the Father in power and glory? How can these things be? Why should we not admit the express declarations of Scripture respecting the one God, even the Father, according to

their *natural, most obvious and only consistent meaning*? What language, what words are sufficiently definite to express the idea that the Father alone is the one true God, if the idea be not expressed in the passages above quoted?

The very forcible evidence which these passages furnish, that the Father, *exclusive of any other persons*, is the true and Supreme God, is, if possible, strengthened by the following texts, which assert his *paternity*, or relation of Father *with respect to Jesus Christ*.

“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Rom. 15. 6. Blessed be God, even *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. 2 Cor. 1. 3. *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, which is blessed forevermore. 2 Cor. 11. 31. Blessed be the God and *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places *in Christ*.” Eph. 1. 3.

Can you, my brethren, hear these passages recited without receiving the impression that the Father of Jesus Christ is a being distinct from Jesus Christ, and as distinct as any father is distinct from his son. The term Father implies that Jesus Christ is a Son. But if the correlative terms, *Father and Son*, do not denote *two numerical and distinct beings*, by what words can such a distinction be denoted? Does not the term Son necessarily denote that his existence began posterior to the commencement of his Father’s existence, and that he depended upon his Father for his existence? Must not these terms then in relation to the only true God and Jesus Christ be strangely perverted, if we so construe, as to make them signify one and the same being? That the Father is in reality the Son, and that the Son is in reality the Father, or that the Father and the Son are one numerical being or God! Does not such a construction of these correlative terms seem, in the highest degree, unnatural? Is it not unwarrantable? Is it not presumptuous?

It is pertinent here to remark, that the word *blessed*, in the passages under consideration, seems evidently to be applied to *God the Father by way of eminence*—that

the appellation of *Father* is equivalent to the term *God*—that God is *the God* as well as the *Father of Christ*, and that as there is but one God, Jesus Christ cannot be the one God, nor included as a co-equal person in the Godhead.—If the Father is the God of Christ, how can Christ himself be the true God, or a person equal to the true God?—Is not this an *impossibility*?

That the Father alone is the true God, is further confirmed by those passages which represent the Father as *the proper object of supreme worship*.

“After this manner *pray ye, our Father* which art in Heaven,” &c. Matt. 6. 9. Luke 11. 2. “The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, *worship the Father*. Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall *worship the Father* in spirit and in truth; for *the Father* seeketh such to *worship him*.” John 4. 21. 23.

The form of prayer in the first quoted passage was prescribed by Christ for the use of his disciples; for our use, and for the use of Christians generally. May we not then regard it as a safe, an excellent and a perfect model?—But to whom are we to address this prayer, but to the *one true God*? Is it not evident, then, that *the Father alone is the one true God*? As there is not the least intimation in any part of this prayer that God consists of more than one person, is not the idea that God is but one person, and that this person is the Father, *as necessary as it is rational*? Must not an essential departure from this most excellent and perfect model, be unjustifiable and deserving of the most pointed reprehensions? But is not prayer, which is addressed to a plurality of persons as equal objects of worship, an essential departure from this model? Does it not imply an egregious censure of Jesus Christ, a confident and criminal leaning to human wisdom, and a robbery of the one God, even the Father, of his just and inalienable due!

The other passage contains part of the conference of Christ with the woman of Samaria, in which he in-

formed her that the time was at hand when local and ritual worship would give place to worship of a spiritual nature. The proper object of this worship he assures her is the Father. But does he here say, or even intimate, that supreme worship is due, and to be given to any other person than the Father? This cannot reasonably be pretended. Nor do we find him, during the whole course of his ministry, directing his disciples or hearers to worship, in the supreme sense, any other being or person, but the Father only, or even intimating that they ought to do so. But does he not in the clearest and most forcible manner intimate that the worship of any other being or person as God, but the Father only, is a *false worship*? How can we otherwise construe his declaration, that the *true worshippers* shall worship *the Father*; and that the Father seeketh such to worship him. If then we worship any being or person distinct from the Father, do we not worship "*we know not what*;" and must not our worship be false and spurious?

The example of Christ in relation to this highly important subject, was strictly conformable to his precept or instruction.

"*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.*" Matt. 11. 25. "*Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.*" Mark 14. 36. Luke 22. 42. "*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" Luke 23. 34. "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*" Luke 23. 46. It was indeed the practice of Christ frequently to address himself in language of supplication to *the Father*. But in doing this, did he not address himself to *the one true God*? Must not the Father *alone* then be the one true God? Had he made supplication to a God consisting of a plurality of persons, and if he was himself one of the supposed persons, he must as well have *suppliated himself* as the other persons. But is this an admissible supposition? Does it not involve the most palpable incongruity? If then our Saviour addressed his supplications to *but one person*, even God his Father, can

we reasonably hesitate to imitate his practice, as "he hath set us an example to follow his steps." But if we are to address ourselves to the Father, as the supreme object of prayer, must not *the Father alone be the Supreme God?*

As Jesus Christ required his disciples, both by precept and example, to pray to the Father, so we have reason to believe that they prayed *only* to the Father as the one true God. That the apostle Paul was a follower of Christ in this respect, we have the fullest assurance. "*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Eph. 3. 14. "*Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Eph. 5. 20. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*" Col. 3. 17. In the view of these passages, are we not constrained, my brethren, to conclude, that in all our prayers and praises we are to acknowledge *the Father alone to be the true God?*

That this is indeed the character of the Father, may, it should seem, be satisfactorily inferred from *the peculiar titles*, which the Scriptures ascribe to him, and *the discriminating representations* which they make concerning him.

I am not insensible that it is frequently said the highest titles, &c. ascribed to God the Father, are also ascribed to Christ the Son. And as this assertion is *confidently* made by men whose opinions have much influence on the public, it is by many readily received as unquestionable truth. But to men who have carefully attended to the subject, the assertion appears groundless. And that it really is so, the following passages will, it is believed, clearly evince.

"This is *the true God* and eternal life." 1 John, 5. 20.* "Every good and perfect gift is from above,

* I am not unaware that many Trinitarians refer this passage to Jesus Christ. But that this reference is inadmissible, I have endeavoured distinctly to show in a late publication. I will here only add—If *Jesus Christ* be the *true God*, it cannot be admitted that the *Father* of Jesus Christ is the *only true God*. Whose declaration are we to believe, that of the faithful and true witness, or the declaration "that the Father is *not* the *only true God?*"

and cometh down from the *Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*" James 1. 17. "To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen." Rom. 16. 27. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen." 1 Tim. 1. 17. "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see, to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." 1 Tim. 6. 15. 16. "I will cry unto God most High, unto God that performeth all things for me." Ps. 57. 2. "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth." Ps. 83. 18. "Thou, Lord, art Most High forevermore." Ps. 92. 8. "And I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation." Dan. 4. 34. "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord; or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?" Acts 7. 48. 50. "The Lord thundered in the heavens; and the Highest gave his voice." Ps. 18. 13. "He that is higher than the highest regardeth." Ecc. 5. 8. "The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." Luke 1. 35. "He (Christ) shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest—the Prophet of the Highest." Luke 1. 32. 76. "Thou, Lord, art high above all the earth; thou art exalted far above all gods." Ps. 97. 9. "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods." Ex. 18. 11. "The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods." Ps. 95. 3. "Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord: neither are there any works like unto thy works." Ps. 86. 8.—That these passages relate to God the Father, is too obvious, I should think, to admit of reasonable doubt. And that they confirm and establish the doctrine that he alone is the Supreme God, seems equally obvious. If every

good and perfect gift cometh down from the *Father*, as the great source of light and good, *no other person or being* can be the original source and bestower. Besides, can it with truth be said of any other person or being but the *Father*, that *he is without variableness or shadow of turning*? Even Jesus Christ, the Son and image of the *Father*, was literally subject to sorrow, grief, fear, joy, gladness and hope. He was “like unto his brethren” in *temptations, sufferings, pain and death*. But would it not be unjustifiable and impious to say these things of God, the *Father of lights*? If glory is to be given to the *Father*, as the only wise God, *through Jesus Christ*, can *any other person or being* have a just claim to the *same glory*? Or is it to be admitted that, although there is but *one* God or person only, who is independently and supremely wise, *other gods or persons* exist who are also independently and supremely wise!—If *the only wise God* is the King eternal, immortal, and invisible—if *he only* hath immortality—if *no man hath seen him, or can see him*, are these characters or attributes to be ascribed to *any other person or being*? Can they with truth or propriety be ascribed to Jesus Christ, “who was the *first born of every creature*?”—*who died*, was *seen and handled* by men, as well after his resurrection, as before his death? But if these characters or attributes do not belong to Jesus Christ, to what other person or being can they belong, but to the God and *Father of Jesus Christ*?—If God the *Father* is the *Most High*, whose name *alone*, in the supreme sense, is *Jehovah*, and whose dominion is absolutely everlasting; and if his hands have made heaven and earth, must *he not be more exalted and more powerful*, than *any other person or being*? Surely no person or being can be *so high*, as that person or being, who is the *Most High*. If the venerable name *Jehovah* belongs, in the strict and highest sense of the word, to the *Most High*, it can belong to *no other person or being* but in an *inferiour and subordinate sense*. If the hands of the *Most High* have made heaven and earth as the *prime and original agent*, no work of creation can with truth be ascribed

to any other person or being, but in a *figurative or subordinate sense*.—If God the Father is the Highest—*higher than the highest* of all other persons or beings, would it not be absurd to say of any other being that he is *equally high*? Jesus Christ is indeed called the Son, and Prophet of the Highest. But *the Son and Prophet* of the Highest, cannot, I should think, be either *the highest, or equal to the highest being*.—If *the one God and Father* is above all, greater than all gods, far exalted above all gods; and if among the gods none are like, or to be compared with him, can it be true that *any persons or beings called gods, are equally exalted, equally great*? or that they have a just claim to that comparison which would make them *strictly equal to him in power and glory*? Would not such a supposition be utterly inconsistent with the above declarations? Would it not present a difficulty, which can never be surmounted? Does it not involve a palpable inconsistency, an *absolute impossibility*? Are we not constrained, then, to conclude, that there is but one true or Supreme God—that he is the Father, and that he is but *one simple and uncompounded mind, or person*? This conclusion seems not only rational, but necessary.

The collection of scripture testimonies which I have made in support of this most highly interesting and important doctrine, might have been greatly extended. But believing these to be competent to my purpose, I have, for the sake of brevity, omitted the others.

In the view of these testimonies, you will decide, my brethren, for yourselves, whether the Father alone be the true God? I claim no dominion over your faith; nor am I desirous to exercise or possess any undue influence in the forming and establishment of your religious opinions on any subject—particularly the subject under review. On no consideration would I be instrumental of giving a wrong bias to your minds, or of leading you into error with respect to the one God. It is nevertheless my heart's desire, and fervent prayer, that you "might know *the only true God*" in such a manner as to obtain life eternal. If he consist of three distinct and co-equal persons, it is not unimportant that

you should believe the doctrine : On the other hand, if he is but one person, it must be highly important that you should admit this doctrine as true. If you would know, and be well grounded in the truth, let the Bible be your instructor ; and as you would reasonably hope to understand its instructions, you will receive them according to their *most natural and obvious meaning*. If from this infallible teacher we find conclusive evidence that God is but one person, we must receive this great and fundamental truth as highly “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”—To these purposes, then, let us of the subject endeavour to make due

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If the one Supreme God is but one person, or if *one supreme person is the one God*, must not *three such persons be three Gods*? This conclusion seems not only rational, but necessary and unavoidable. The one God is possessed of all perfections, natural and moral ; and these perfections are unlimited or infinite. The truth of these positions is readily admitted by Christians of all denominations. But does not the person of the Father possess these perfections? This, it is presumed, none will deny, or question. But if *the person* of the Father possesses all the perfections which belong to God, *must he not himself be God*? This, it should seem, cannot, with any appearance of reason, be denied. Must it not also be admitted, that if another, or *second person*, possess all natural and moral perfections, unlimited and infinite, *He must be another or second God*? And if a *third person* possess the same perfections, *must not He also be God, equal in power and glory*? As each possesses precisely the same perfections, a perfect equality must exist between them.—But is this the doctrine of the Bible? Is it consistent with the plain and express, and decisive testimonies, which, in the foregoing discourse, have been produced from that holy and infallible volume? As from that source we learn that “unto us (Christians) there is but

one God, *the Father*, of whom are all things," what are we to think or say of *that doctrine*, which seems directly opposed to *this*? a doctrine, which asserts "that the Father possesses divine attributes, and is therefore God; that the Son possesses divine attributes, and is therefore God; that the Holy Spirit also possesses divine attributes, and is therefore God;"—"that the Son is essentially equal with the Father, and that the Holy Spirit, like the Father and the Son, is truly and essentially divine." Does not this doctrine destroy the *Divine Unity*? Is it not inconsistent with the divine testimonies, which unambiguously declare, "*There is one God, and none other but he*"—that this one God is the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*"—"that he is *the only true God, the only wise God, the only Potentate, the Most High*, higher than the *Highest*, and *exalted far above all gods*."

I am not insensible, that, although the advocates of the above strange, and *seemingly tri-theistic* theory, speak of the Father as God in the supreme sense, of the Son as God in the supreme sense, and of the Holy Spirit as God in the supreme sense, they profess to deny the existence of three Supreme Gods, and to believe that "the Divine Three so exist together as to be one God." They admit also that the doctrine of "three co-equal Gods, involves an inconsistency and even an impossibility." Nor will they plead, it is presumed, that three Gods are or can be one God. Why then do they speak of a *Divine Three*, and of *each* of the three, *in the supreme sense, as God*? Can the answer, that the "Divine Three" are not three distinct *Gods*, but three divine "*persons*," "equal in power and glory," be satisfactory? This answer cannot, I should think, satisfy the mind of any reflecting and inquisitive man, who regards *meaning* more than *words*, and *sense* more than *sound*. How is it known that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are three persons—*distinct persons*? Because *each is called God*? Must not *God* and *person* then be *equivalent terms*—terms of the same *import*? If however the term *God* does not mean the same as the term *person*: but if these terms are essen-

tially different in meaning, must it not be repugnant to all correct rules of reasoning to infer, that the "Divine Three" are *three divine persons*, because in Scripture *each is called God*? Such an inference must, it should seem, involve the most glaring incongruity. Will you infer, that a man is *a person* and *not a man*, because he is *called a man*? The absurdity of such an inference is too gross not to be seen by the most indistinct vision. Can it be consistent then to infer, that "the Divine Three" are not three distinct Gods, but three distinct persons? "The Son, and Holy Spirit, are never *called persons* in the Scriptures, but the name God is applied to each, as well as to the Father; each of them therefore must be *a person*, but each cannot be *God*!" On such reasoning as this, is the doctrine of the Divine Three equal persons supported! But who *are* the three persons! What is their character! We are told that each possesses divine attributes—that each is equal to the others in power and glory.—If by this we are to understand (as I suppose we are,) that each possesses infinite divine perfections, why should they be called three distinct infinite persons, instead of three distinct infinite Gods, as if the term persons implies something essentially different from the term Gods? Must not *this distinction be merely nominal*? If each of these supposed persons possess the same perfections as belong to the being called God, is it not just as proper to call them Gods as persons? Must they not *necessarily be three Gods*? By ascribing to them *a different name*, we make *no alteration in their character*. Whatever argument, therefore, is employed to prove the existence of three divine persons equal in power and glory, must be considered, it is humbly conceived, as an argument employed to prove the existence of three Gods equal in power and glory. If, then, no argument is, or can be available to prove the existence of three such Gods, must it not be admitted that no argument is, or can be available to prove the existence of three persons of that description? "*I speak as unto wise men; judge ye.*"*

* To avoid the insuperable difficulties involved in the doctrine of the Trinity as above stated, several other statements and explications of the doctrine have been invented. But neither of them affords any satisfactory

2. If the one true God is *but one person*, how unreasonable and presumptuous must be the supposition that it is necessary to life eternal to believe, that he exists in *three co-equal persons*? Although an erroneous faith may not exclude a person from eternal life, yet it is difficult to conceive that an erroneous faith is conducive, and even necessary to the attainment of eternal life. Such a faith may well be supposed rather to *endanger* the eternal life of the soul, than to operate as a *security* to that great and unspeakable blessing. If then there is but one God, and this one God is the person of the Father, must not the belief in the existence of three divine and infinite persons be as pregnant of *danger*, as it is of *error*? Is such a belief *consistent* with knowing the *Father of Jesus Christ* to be *the only true God*? If, then, in the view of the cloud of witnesses, which have been produced in this discourse, testifying that the *Father alone* is the true God, you embrace, and hold fast the doctrine of three divine and infinite persons, may it not reasonably be apprehended that you endan-

relief from painful confusion, and inextricable perplexity of mind. Of these different statements and explications, the following example is submitted to your consideration:—"The one God exists in three *modes or relations*, such as *Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier*." As *Creator*, he is the *Father*; as *Redeemer*, he is the *Son*; and as *Sanctifier*, he is the *Holy Spirit*.—Some of the most distinguished defenders of the Trinitarian hypothesis explicitly say, "this is what we mean, and *all we mean*, when we say that God is three persons." Nor is it improbable that Trinitarian Christians (so called) generally embrace this theory, as the most rational and consistent. But whether it does not involve unsurmountable difficulties, permit me to ask, "Is the term *persons* ever used in Scripture to denote *three relations* in God—*Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier*? Did these modes or relations exist in God, before the existence of men; before they were capable of being actually redeemed and sanctified? If not, how could a trinity of modes, relations or persons have existed *from eternity*? Are these modes or relations, and *each* of them, to be considered as possessing *all divine perfections*, as having a claim to *worship*, and in the highest sense? Or is the *Being*, in whom these modes exist, to be considered as the *exclusive object* of such worship? Is a mode or relation of God, in distinction from God himself, possessed of creating power, redeeming love, and sanctifying operations? Could either of these modes have become incarnate, and subject to suffering and death? Can you believe that it is the peculiar and exclusive office of the supposed mode or relation called the Father to create, when creation is expressly ascribed by inspired penmen to the Spirit? Or can you believe that it is the peculiar and exclusive office of the supposed mode or relation called the Spirit to sanctify, when both in the Old, and New Testament, God the Father is represented as performing the work of sanctification?"—Due attention to these queries must convince you, I should think, that *this modal Trinity is very widely different from the scripture doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that it is utterly indefensible.*

ger the salvation of your souls? By this insinuation it is not my object *to terrify* you into the belief that God is one person, but earnestly *to invite* your serious, diligent, and prayerful attention to the subject. It is my wish so to interest your feelings, and arouse your mental energies in the pursuit of truth, as shall terminate in a clear and satisfactory discovery of it.

Should you endeavour to satisfy your minds with the plea, that, although you believe in the existence of three divine and infinite persons, you nevertheless believe that these persons constitute but one God, permit me to ask, can you rely, and with unshaken confidence, on the strength of this apology? If so, I cannot but be apprehensive that your confidence is the effect of inconsideration, a wrong bias of mind, or precipitancy of judgment. But what am I to understand by your belief, that three infinite persons are one God? that the *three persons* are but *one person*, or that *three Gods* are but *one God*? 'This you will probably say is not your meaning. To believe in either of these suppositions, you will not hesitate to say, would be absurd. And that it would indeed imply an absurdity, is too evident to be denied. But is it not *equally absurd* to believe that *three persons*, each distinct from the others, and each possessed of all infinite perfections, constitute *one God*? Is not an *individual person* possessed of these perfections, equal—every way equal, to *one numerical God* possessed of the same perfections? And is not that person *precisely the same being* with the *one God*? How then can the one God exist in three such persons? Is this strange supposition to be admitted as an unquestionable truth? Can it be entitled to rational belief? Can you believe that *three human persons* make but *one man*? How then can you believe that *three divine persons* make but *one God*? If you really believe in the existence of three divine persons equal in power and glory, I see not how you can satisfy your minds that you believe in the existence of but one God.

3. If you believe in three distinct divine persons equal in power and glory, must not *each* of these persons have an *equal claim to your reverence and worship*? 'This can, with no appearance of reason, be de-

nied; nor are you disposed, I presume, to deny it. But are you under no apprehension, that in offering supreme reverence and worship to three distinct persons, you acknowledge and worship three distinct Gods? In thus worshipping three persons, you acknowledge *three distinct objects* of supreme worship. And these objects you *really worship*. But what is the distinction between three *objects*, who have a claim to supreme worship, and three *Gods* who have a claim to supreme worship? Must not the *distinction be without any real difference*? Or what distinction can you make between *supreme worship* paid to three objects, and *supreme worship* paid to three Gods? Must not the worship in both cases be the *same* as well in *nature* or *quality*, as in *degree*? But if the worship of three Gods is forbidden *as idolatrous*, must the worship of three objects, by whatever name they may be called, be equally forbidden *as idolatrous*? I see not how this conclusion can, satisfactorily, or even *speciously*, be avoided. If it be a just and necessary conclusion, it must certainly be a very serious and *alarming one*. It is therefore most earnestly recommended to the awakened, and serious consideration of those who professedly worship, in the supreme sense, three distinct objects or persons.

A due examination of the subject must, it should seem, overcome and effectually remove the strongest prepossession in favour of the doctrine of three distinct divine persons, equal in power and glory, and fill the pious mind with a *conscientious dread* of offering supreme worship to three distinct objects. With a just and clear view of the subject, must not the rationally devout soul *shrink* from the worship under review with the vehement exclamation, "*How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God!*" Will he, with approbation, suffer his glory to be given to another? How can I disregard that paramount authority, "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve?*"

If, to exculpate yourselves from the imputation of offering supreme worship to three distinct objects, you should say that you commonly address yourselves, in

your prayers and praises, exclusively *to the person of the Father*, you will permit me to suggest, whether this plea is not both insufficient and unreasonable. I doubt not that you, *generally*, in your prayers and praises, do address yourselves *exclusively* to the person of the Father. But is this a good reason, or a sufficient excuse for *sometimes* addressing yourselves to *two other persons as objects of supreme worship*? If supreme worship is due to the person of the Father *only*, must it not be highly unreasonable—must it not be altogether unjustifiable, to give supreme worship to the other persons, *at any time, or on any occasion*? On the other hand, if the three persons are equal in power and glory, *the same worship must be due to each*. Why then do you select the *person* of the Father as the *principal object* of worship? Must not this preference of the Father, be considered as implying a most unreasonable neglect and disregard of *the other persons*? Can this your delinquent conduct then towards *them* be consistent with *their claims*? Must it not incur their just and high displeasure? “*Why,*” then, “*even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?*”*

4. If the one Supreme God, the Father, is but one person, must not *the denial* of this great and fundamental truth, be as *criminal* as it is an egregious departure from that form of sound words which has been transmitted to us from Jesus Christ and his apostles, and especially when it is *public*, and accompanied with circumstances of *peculiar solemnity*? You will readily assent, my brethren, to the truth of these suggestions. Nor is it easy to believe that any honest Christian, whose mind has not been perverted by “the doctrines and commandments of men,” but will immediately give the same assent.—As the Scriptures unequivocally teach that there is but one God, the Father, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that

* Should it be said that scripture precept and example will justify the selection of the Father as the principal object of prayer and worship, it will readily be admitted. But does not the fact clearly evince that the Father is the *only* object of supreme worship? Believing as we do, that this is indeed the case, we can discover *no consistency* in the Trinitarian worship, which assumes *different forms*, and respects *different objects*. Nor can we forbear to say that either the worship of a trinity of distinct co-equal persons, or one being consisting of a trinity of such persons, is, in our apprehension, extremely irrational and blindly presumptuous.

the true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth, "who," you may be ready to ask, "has the presumption to deny it, and especially in the face of the world!" Strange as it may appear, this *all important and precious doctrine* is by many Christians (if their words are intelligible) expressly *denied* and *rejected* as a *fundamental error*. It is a prominent article in their creed, that "the Father alone is not the true God." Nor are Christians, however distinguished for strictness of morals and eminence in the Christian virtues, admissible to church fellowship and communion with them, unless they deny that *the Father is the one God, by acknowledging that two other persons are equal to him in power and glory*. Is this confession agreeable to "the faith once delivered unto the saints?" Can it be justifiable to require this confession as a term of Christian communion? Did Jesus Christ require his apostles to make this confession, or *any thing like it*, as a term of admission into his kingdom? Is it not indeed a *palpable dereliction of his command, and a disregard of his authority*? Is it not also a confession utterly *unintelligible*, as well to *those who require*, as to *those who make it*? Must it not then be as unreasonable, as it is unjustifiable?

5. If the person of the Father is the one true God, whence originated the doctrine that the one God is three persons, or exists in three persons? This is an interesting question. It claims our serious and interested attention. A fair and satisfactory solution of it, must be desirable as it is important. From the Scripture testimonies in this discourse, it must appear too evident, I should think, that God is but one person, to admit of reasonable denial or doubt. It is a well known fact that the Jews, who may well be supposed to understand the language, in which their Scriptures were written, find nothing in those Scriptures, in favour of the doctrine that God is three persons. And that the light of nature or reason teaches this extraordinary doctrine, none, it is presumed, will pretend. The most strenuous advocates of this doctrine admit, that reason would never lead to the discovery of it. Is it not a fact

also, that this doctrine was unknown in the Christian Church, and that "the belief of one God the Father supreme over all" was, in a great measure, preserved among Christians, till the fourth century? Although I would not, in too peremptory a manner, assert that this was the case, yet I do not hesitate to say, that the probability it was so, is very great. In saying this, I express the conviction of my own mind, which has resulted from a careful examination of the subject. The apostles' creed, so called, which is venerable for its antiquity, and which in no degree favours the Trinitarian doctrine, was received in all the primitive Churches as containing the Catholic faith. The creed is expressed as follows—"I believe in God the Father, Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick (the living) and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." Upon this creed I shall make no comment. It speaks for itself. I will only observe that as this creed, without any material variation, was received as a summary of Scripture doctrines, by Christians generally, for several centuries, it seems highly probable, that in those pure ages, the doctrine of three persons in one God, was unknown. And that this was indeed the fact, the testimonies of the primitive Christian fathers in support of the supremacy of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, furnish, it should seem, conclusive evidence. It appears to have been generally, if not universally, their belief, that "God the Father is the Maker and Creator of all, who alone has no origin, invisible, immense, immortal, eternal, the one God, to whose greatness, majesty and power, nothing can be preferred or compared;" and that if "Christ had been uncreated, and likewise unbegotten, there would have been two unbegotten, and therefore two

Gods ;” that “he taught that there is one God, and that he only ought to be worshipped ; nor did he ever say that he (himself) was God.”—Such were the opinions of those primitive fathers of the Christian Church, who were its brightest ornaments, respecting the one God, and Jesus Christ. Although they sometimes expressed themselves on these points ambiguously, yet it cannot, it is believed, be reasonably doubted, that they meant to maintain the doctrine of the divine unity, or that the Supreme God is but one person.

From these considerations, does it not seem necessary to infer, that the doctrine of three co-equal persons in one God is to be ascribed to human device as its origin, and to that device which “darkens counsel by words without knowledge?”—This doctrine made but little progress till the *fourth* century ; nor was it brought to a perfect state till towards the close of the *fifth* century. At that dark and corrupt period of the Church, it is admitted, that this most singular doctrine obtained general belief, which was followed with the worship of the Virgin Mary, the invocation of saints and angels, together with a huge mass of jargon, and superstitions, and absurd rites and ceremonies.

Such being the probable origin of the doctrine under consideration, I cannot think it entitled to much respect, or that it has a very strong claim to unhesitating credence.

6. Is there but one true God, even the Father ? In what estimation then is the conduct of Christian Ministers and Churches to be held, who, rejecting this doctrine, reject also their fellow Christians as hereticks and infidels, who conscientiously adhere to, and fearlessly, but with meekness, defend it ? Is this conduct a certain indication of *Christian zeal directed by knowledge* ? Is it evincive of that *divine charity which is pure, peaceable, and gentle—which suffereth long and is kind, which doth not behave itself unseemly, thinketh no evil, but rejoiceth in the truth* ? Is it consistent with *apostolic and primitive practice* ? Is it agreeable to the *example of the Waldensian Church*, which shone with a mild, and propitious, and evangelical light in the dark period of general ignorance and corruption ? Does it bear a *shadow* of resemblance to the conduct of those

eminently amiable, learned, and holy men, *Doddridge* and *Watts*? Do we, in a word, *find any thing in the whole course of our Saviour's ministry which gives the least sanction or countenance to the conduct of such Ministers and Churches?* The proper answers to these questions are too obvious to need insertion.

While we are willing to admit that our Christian brethren, who are chargeable with this conduct, act a conscientious part, and really think that they "do God service" by their zealous exertions to suppress what they believe to be a most dangerous heresy;—while we allow ourselves to indulge no feelings of unhallowed resentment against them, or a desire of retaliation, yet we are constrained to say, that we cannot but strongly apprehend that "a deceived heart has turned them aside" from the simplicity that is in Christ, "to walk after their own devices;" and that they are chargeable with "judging and setting at naught their brethren" in a manner, which has no claim *to the approbation of the one God, or of the one Lord Jesus Christ, the constituted head and lawgiver of the Church*. We must therefore be permitted very solemnly to admonish, and earnestly to entreat them, as beloved brethren, very seriously to review their conduct, and the theory which has led to it, that, if in an error, they may discover and correct it.

7. If God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the one God, existing in one person, is it not in the highest degree important that *we receive, acknowledge, and with all "the meekness of wisdom," fearlessly defend this great and essential truth!*—If to know Him as the only true God, is eternal life; if the salvation of our souls depend on, or is inseparably connected with the knowledge of this truth, as our text seems distinctly to teach us, the subject must have the strongest claim to our most awakened consideration and interested regard. If we deny this doctrine, is there not much reason to apprehend that God, who will not give his glory to another, will deny us? If in this faith, then, we are not "well grounded and settled," let it be our solicitous concern to obtain, without delay, clear and satisfactory light from the sacred volume, respecting the character

of the only true God. But if we are established in the belief that the one God is the Father, let no dishonest shame, love of ease and popularity, or fear of reproach, deter us from an open avowal, and a humble but firm defence of our faith. *Let no artful disguise, disingenuous prevarication, or timid concealment with respect to this momentous doctrine, ever mark our conduct and tarnish our character as men and Christians.* In acting the open, the undisguised and Christian part, can we make any sacrifice “worthy to be compared” with the knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, or “with the glory which shall be revealed in us,” if we make this knowledge the guide of our conduct? As we regard our Christian profession—as we would maintain our integrity—as we would be instrumental of promoting “pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father”—as we would hope to obtain his approbation and final acceptance of us through Jesus Christ, *let us not trifle with this infinitely important and interesting subject.*—God is a jealous God.—He claims unrivalled power and glory. And as there is no God *with him*, or *besides him*, so he has expressly enjoined “*thou shalt have no other Gods before me,*” or *in comparison with me.* Nor will he hold us guiltless, if we set up any other God, or being, or agent, or person, as a *supreme object of reverence and worship.* Can we, then, too conscientiously, or with too much care and solicitude, guard against “*the very appearance*” of doing this? Are we not under indispensable obligation, not only to believe, but to *acknowledge and advocate the strict unity of God?* But we are to remember, that to do this alone, is *not sufficient to eternal life.* To obtain that great and infinite good, God must be the object of our *supreme love and reverence*; we must *cheerfully submit to his will*, and *habitually obey his holy and just commands.* Blessed are they who *thus know God*, “that they may have a right,” by virtue of divine promise in Christ Jesus, “to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”—If any of our fellow Christians *seem* to set up three Gods or distinct objects of supreme worship, let us not too hastily conclude that this is *really the case.* Although they often express

themselves on this subject in such a manner as to imply a belief in three Gods equal in power and glory, yet as they disavow such a belief, does not that charity, which hopeth all things, require us to admit this their disavowal, as a *virtual acknowledgment that the one God is but one person, and that this person is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?* But should their belief respecting the character of God, be *really* different from ours;—should it be inconsistent, and even injurious to themselves, to others, and to the cause of unadulterated Christianity, let us not “revile,” “persecute,” and “defame,” but “entreat them as brethren.”

In my next discourse I shall endeavour faithfully to exhibit the character of *Jesus Christ*, as given by the inspiration of God.

Now to the King eternal, immortal and invisible, the only wise, and only true God, be glory in the Church by *Jesus Christ. Amen.*

SERMON II.

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF

THE SON.

John 17, 3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*

THESE are the words of Jesus Christ, the faithful and true Witness. They are, therefore, worthy of all acceptation. To "the only true God" he addresses himself in solemn prayer as his Father. *The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, then, is the only true God.* To know, to acknowledge and to worship him *in this character*, is the way to obtain eternal life. To know *Jesus Christ*, also, whom his Father, the true God, *sent* into the world, is also the way to eternal life; because, by knowing him, we know the will of God the Father; for he hath *given* unto us *the words which God gave* unto him.

To know him, who is the Father of Jesus Christ, to be the only true God, and Jesus Christ to be the Messiah, is *the foundation of Christianity*. To illustrate and establish these most interesting and important truths, would be, I observed to you, a few Sabbaths past, my humble attempt.

The propositions to be considered, were thus stated.

I. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is alone the true God.

II. Jesus Christ is not the true God, but is inferior to him.

In attempting to illustrate and support the truth of the first of these propositions, I exhibited to your view, and submitted to your consideration several classes of Scripture texts. The *first* of these classes testified that *there is but one God*. "There is none other God but one."—The *second* testified that this one God *is one*

simple uncompound Being. This testimony is grounded on the facts, that in speaking of himself, the one God almost invariably uses the singular pronoun, *I, Mine, Me* ; and that when spoken of, the singular pronouns, *Thou, Thy, Thee* ; *He, His, Him*, are used. The *third* class testified that *the Father is the one God.* The *fourth*, that *the one God is the Father of Jesus Christ.* The *fifth* class testified that *the one God, even the Father, is the only proper object of supreme worship.* The *sixth* class ascribed to God the Father peculiar titles of dignity and glory.

From these, and some other considerations, the inference, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is alone the true God, was considered as clear and satisfactory.

The second proposition contained in the text, now claims our serious consideration.

II. Jesus Christ is not the true God, but is inferior to him.

If the truth of the *first* proposition has been established, the truth of the *second* seems to require no proof. But as the proof of the first proposition may be considered as inconclusive, it will be my object *distinctly* to prove the truth of the second.

Solemnly impressed with the importance of the subject, it will be my object, in the discussion of it, to make the inspired Scriptures my only guide and counsellor.

That Jesus Christ is not the true God, is a truth, as some believe, so fully substantiated by Scripture testimony, as to admit not even the shadow of a doubt. Although I am not willing to use so strong and peremptory expressions in relation to the subject, yet I am earnestly desirous that you should, from a careful examination of the Scriptures, come to a clear and satisfactory knowledge of the truth with respect to Jesus. In order to this, I shall submit to your consideration a cloud of Scripture witnesses, which seem clearly to prove that he is inferior to the Father. That you may rightly understand, and duly estimate them, let your minds be free from unreasonable bias, and perfectly open to conviction.

What then saith the Scripture concerning Jesus Christ?

1st. That he is *a man*, and *the son of man*. Speaking of Jesus, Pilate exclaims, "Behold *the man*!" John 19. 5. The wife of Pilate "sent unto him, saying, have thou nothing to do with *that just man*." Matt. 27. 19. The Jews, on hearing the instruction of Jesus, make earnest inquiry, "whence hath *this man* this wisdom?" Matt. 13. 54. "Never man spake like *this man*." John 7. 46.

In like manner John the Baptist and the apostles of our Lord speak of him. "After me cometh *a man* who is preferred before me." John 1. 6. "Jesus, *a man* approved of God among you." Acts 2. 22. "Through *this man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Acts 13. 38. "But *this man*, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." Heb. 10. 12. "And he (Stephen) said, behold, I see the heavens opened, and *the son of man* standing on the right hand of God." Acts 7. 56.

Jesus Christ often speaks of himself as *the son of man*. "Whom do men say that I, *the son of man*, am?" Matt. 16. 13. "*The son of man* came eating and drinking." Matt. 11. 19. "*The son of man* is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him." Mark 9. 31. "*The son of man* must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be slain, and be raised on the third day." Luke 9. 22. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must *the son of man* be lifted up." John 3. 14.

In the view of these passages, let me ask you, my brethren, "who is *this man*—*this son of man*?" Will you say, or can you believe, that he is *the one true God*? Will you not rather say, that it is utterly inconceivable that a man, who is approved of God, is that very God by whom he is approved? That a man, who having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down on the right hand of God, is that very God, on whose right hand he is seated? That the Supreme God came among men eating and drinking? That he was delivered into the hands of men to be killed—and that he really suffered many things, was slain, and raised from the dead

But if the son of man, the man Christ Jesus, is not the true God, are we to consider him as a mere man, and in all respects like other men, excepting his separation from sin? This, we shall not be likely to admit, when we consider that he is "*the Lord from Heaven.*" 1 Cor. 15. 47.—That he is "*the one mediator between God and men*"—That he "*is Lord even of the Sabbath*"—That he hath "*power on earth to forgive sins;*" That he possessed "*power to execute judgment;*" and that he will, hereafter, "*come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him,*" to execute his commission as Judge. Such is the office—such the authority, power, and glory of Jesus Christ, *considered as man, or son of man.* Must he not therefore be a man widely different and highly distinguished from other men? Are you then willing to say, or can you believe, "*that he is as truly a man as any one of Adam's race?*" This indeed is said of Jesus Christ by many of our Christian brethren, who are reputedly sound in *the orthodox faith.* But strongly apprehensive that they hold his character in too low estimation, we are not prepared to use their language, nor subscribe to this article of their belief. It is much more consonant to our views and feelings to think, and speak of him as "*the man who is fellow,*" who is *near and dear* to "*the Lord of Hosts.*" Although we dare not admit that the man Christ Jesus is the true and Supreme God, yet we esteem it as a truth worthy of our most joyful acceptance, that, so far from being a man on a level with other men, he is *next to the One Supreme in power and glory.*

2d. That Jesus Christ is not the true and Supreme God, seems highly probable, if not certain, from those passages of Scripture which *clearly distinguish him from the true God.* The following, as a specimen, are submitted to your consideration. "*I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things.*" 1 Tim. 5. 21. "*Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and unto an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of*

just men made perfect, and to *Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.*" Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24. "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in *God*; believe also in *me.*" John 14. 1. "For there is *one God*, and *one mediator* between God and men." 1 Tim. 2. 5.

Do not these passages, my brethren, very clearly *distinguish* Jesus Christ from "*God, the Judge of all?*" Is not the mark of distinction between *them* as obvious and as strong as that between "*God and the elect angels,*" and "*the spirits of just men made perfect?*" But if Jesus Christ is a person or being *distinct* from the Supreme God, is it reasonable to suppose that he is himself the Supreme God? Is it conceivable that *two distinct* persons or beings are, or can be, *one numerical* person, being or God? Will you not say that the supposition involves a palpable contradiction? But does not the supposition of *two supreme* persons or beings involve an equal contradiction? The ascription of *supremacy* to any person or being, implies, that the person or being, to whom this ascription is made, has *no rival*. To admit the existence of *two supremes*, is virtually to deny supremacy to *each*. There can therefore be but one supreme person, being or God. This being is God the Father, who is "*far exalted above all gods.*" Can Jesus Christ, then, be the Supreme God? If not, he must be inferior to the Supreme God. If this were not the case, how could he be a *distinct* object of faith, or how could he be the one mediator *between* the one God and man? Surely a mediator must be distinct from the parties between whom he mediates. How then can Jesus Christ be the one God and mediate *between himself* and man?

3d. That Jesus Christ is not the true God, but inferior to him, is to be inferred, it should seem, from the circumstance that he is *the Son of the true God*.

"Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, then blasphemest; because I said, I am *the Son of God?*" John 10. 36. This is the testimony of Jesus Christ in reference to himself. This testimony is confirmed by God his Father. "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" Matt. 3. 17—17. 5. On the authority of this testimony, the

apostles of our Lord frequently speak of him as *the Son of God*. "The gospel of Jesus Christ *the Son of God*." Mark 1. 1. "And I saw and bare record that this is *the Son of God*." John 1. 34. "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, *the Son of God*." John 20. 31. "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is *the Son of God*." Acts 9. 20. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is *the Son of God*, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." 1 John, 4. 15. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is *the Son of God*." 1 John, 5. 5.

Rightly to understand this title as applied to Jesus Christ, is highly important, as otherwise we may form a conception of his character essentially erroneous, and lamentably evil in its tendency and practical effects. We are often told that *Son of God* expresses *supreme divinity*. But this sentiment will not be likely to be admitted as true, when it is duly considered that Christ, as *Son*, expressly declared that *he knew not* when a certain future event would happen, and that one of his apostles has assured us that "the Father hath put the times, or the seasons, in *his own power*." Jesus Christ is also often spoken of as *the eternal Son of God*, and his generation as an *eternal generation*. But these representations must appear, it is believed, highly incorrect to the reflecting and unbiassed mind. If the Son of God were *generated*, how can he be *self-existent*, *independent*, or *eternal*? Besides, does not the term *Son*, necessarily imply a *Father*? And does not the term *Father*, necessarily imply *priority of existence*?

As very erroneous opinions have been entertained and propagated concerning the filiation or sonship of Jesus Christ, and have occasioned much confusion of thought and uncharitable practice, it becomes us to give all diligence to ascertain what saith the Scripture on this interesting subject.

From this sure word of instruction we learn that Jesus Christ is called the Son of the Highest—the Son of God.

1st. On account of *his miraculous conception*. The salutation of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, is

followed with these remarkable words—"Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son, and he shall be called the Son of the Highest."—"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; *therefore* also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called *the Son of God.*" Luke 1. 31. 32. 35. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth *his Son made of a woman.*" Gal. 4. 4.

2d. He is called the Son of God, because he is *the Messiah or Christ, and sanctified and set apart by the Father to his high and honourable office.* "Jesus answered—say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?" John 10. 36. "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." John 1. 32. 34. "But *these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*" John 20. 31. *The name Christ implies the anointed of God.* On this account, *therefore*, he is called *the Son of God.*

3d. He is called the Son of God on account of *his resurrection from the dead by the power of God.* "Declared to be *the Son of God*, with power, according to the spirit of holiness, *by the resurrection from the dead.*" Rom. 1. 4. "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that *he hath raised up Jesus again*; as it is also written in the second psalm; thou art *my Son*, this day have *I begotten thee.*" Acts 13. 32. 33. Because he was begotten, or raised from the dead by the power of the Father, Jesus is called the Son of God.

4th. Jesus Christ is called the Son of God on account of *his exaltation, and delegated authority and power.* "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and

quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will ; for the Father judgeth no man ; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." John 5. 21. 22. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things ; by whom also he made the worlds." "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he (God) at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" Heb. 1. 1, 2, 4, 5.

5th. It is not improbable that Jesus Christ is called the Son of God on account of his being, *in a peculiar sense, the image of God, and the beginning of his creation.* "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature." Col. 1. 15. "Unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write ; these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Rev. 3. 14. Once more—

6th. Jesus Christ seems to be called the Son of God because *he is the object of his peculiar complacency and regard.* The name, *Son of God*, is a mark of *high distinction.* This is evident, from the manner in which it is applied, as well to the disciples of Christ, as to Christ himself. "Behold," says the apostle John, addressing his fellow christians, "what manner of *love* the Father hath bestowed upon us, *that we should be called the Sons of God.*" 1 John, 3. 1. That this title is an eminently glorious one, and is indicative, when applied to Christ, of the Father's peculiar favour and regard, is evident from the manner in which it is applied. "All things," says Jesus, "are delivered unto me of my Father ; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Matt. 11. 27. "He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 2 Pet. 1. 17.

But notwithstanding the appellation, *Son of God*, is

a high and exalted title, importing the peculiar complacency and regard of the Father, yet is it not equally evident, that it implies dependence on, and subjection to the Father? If the terms *Father* and *Son* do not imply superiority in the Father and dependence in the Son, must not the meaning of human speech be unintelligible, and all attempts to convey distinct and definite ideas, by words, be vain?

4th. That Jesus Christ is not the true God, but inferior to him, seems evident from the fact that he came into the world *not to do his own will, but the will of his Father*, as appears from the following testimonies. "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, *not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" Matt. 26. 39. Mark 14. 35. "For I came down from Heaven, *not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*" John 6. 38. "Jesus saith unto them, my meat is to do *the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*" John 4. 34. "I seek *not mine own will, but the will of the Father* which sent me." John 5. 30. "Then said I, lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do *thy will, O God.*" Heb. 10. 7.

By these passages we cannot suppose that the will of Jesus Christ, and the will of his Father, were one numerical will. The will of Christ appears to have been as distinct from the will of God his Father, as the will of any other person or being is distinct from the will of God. Nor is there in these passages the least intimation that he possessed *two wills*, the one human and the other divine; but, on the contrary, the strongest intimation, that his will was *numerically one*. "I seek *not mine own will.*" Does not this most evidently imply that but *one will* belonged to Christ. Besides, could any higher will belong to him—or a will more divine than that which he derived, or brought *from Heaven*? But as he always subjected his own will to the will of God, can it reasonably be supposed that he is the true God! If submission and obedience to the will of another implies dependence on, and inferiority to that other being. I see not but it follows by necessary

consequence, that Jesus Christ is inferior to God the Father.

5th. The circumstance that *Jesus Christ was sent of the Father, seems to furnish conclusive evidence of his dependence and inferiority.* Several passages besides the text have already been quoted, in which the Father is said to have *sent* him. It will therefore be needless here to multiply passages in support of this point. A few additional passages only will be quoted. "Jesus cried and said, he that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that *sent me*." John 12. 44. "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me: and they have received them, and they have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst *send me*"—"that the world may believe that thou didst *send me*." "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast *sent me*." John 17. 8. 21. 25. "God *sent not his Son* into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." John 3. 17. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God *sent his only begotten Son* into the world, that we might live through him." 1 John, 4. 9.

In these passages we find as well a *sender*, as one who is *sent*. But does it require any reasoning to show that the person who is sent is *distinct* from the person who sends him? Do you then believe, my brethren, that God the Father did really send his Son into the world, to deliver his message, to speak his words, that the world through him might be saved? Instead of denying, you will acknowledge this to be an unquestionable truth. Will you then deny, or can you doubt, that Jesus Christ is dependent on, inferior, and under obligation to the true God?—That he really is so, seems evident,

6th. From the consideration, that *he performed no works by an underived or independent power*, as will appear from the following passages. "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? But if *I cast out devils by the spirit of God*, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Matt.

12. 27. 28. "If *I* by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt but the kingdom of God is come upon you." Luke 11. 20. "I can of mine own self do nothing." John 5. 30. "Jesus said unto them, when ye have lifted up the son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that *I* do nothing of myself." John 8. 28. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as yourselves also know." Acts 2. 22.

If, my hearers, Jesus Christ, during his ministry on earth, did *nothing of himself*; but cast out devils by the spirit, the finger, or power of God;—if God by him, as the instrument, wrought miracles, and wonders, and signs, is it to be admitted, that he did *every thing of himself* by an *underived and independent power*? Or that he is the true God? Can we admit the supposition without admitting that *contrariety and concordance imply the same thing*? Can we admit it without contradicting the apostle Peter, and even our Lord himself? Will you, to avoid this imputation, say that the passages above quoted represent Christ in his human or lowest character? But is not this to "darken counsel by words without knowledge?" Is not the supposition that he possessed two characters or natures, the one consisting of humanity, and the other of supreme divinity, *merely gratuitous*? There is nothing in the above passages, nor, it is believed, in any part of Scripture, to justify the supposition. What is there belonging to Jesus Christ more than *himself—his own self*? But if, of himself—his own self—he could *do nothing*, does it not follow of course, that he could do nothing *independently by any nature he possessed*? If this conclusion is not just and necessary, there is no art of reasoning, it should seem, which is not fallacious.

7th. That Jesus Christ is not the true God, may be inferred from the consideration, that *he received commands from the Father*. Christ's own testimony, in relation to this subject, is contained in the following passages—"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I

know that his commandment is life everlasting ; whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as *the Father said unto me, so I speak.*" John 12. 49. 50. "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as *the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.*" John 14. 31. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love ; even as *I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*" John 15. 10.

In the view of these passages, permit me to ask you, my brethren, whether you believe, or *can* believe, that the true God is subject to the authority of a superior, and receives commands from any person or being in the universe ? Do you believe, or can you believe, that he does not speak of himself, or by his own authority ; but that he has a Father who has given him a commandment, what he should speak and what he should do ? Can you be so destitute of respect and reverence for the character of the Supreme and Independent God, as not to revolt at such a supposition ? Is it possible, then, that you can believe that Jesus Christ, who really and truly received commandments from his Father, and faithfully kept them, is, notwithstanding, the true God ? Does not the supposition imply, at once, the most palpable incongruity, and a transfer of the glory of the Supreme God, to another ?

8th. That Jesus Christ is not the true God, seems apparent from the consideration, that *the doctrines which he taught, were not originally his own, but delivered to him from the Father.* "He whom God sent, *speaketh the words of God.*" John 3. 34. "And the Jews marvelled, saying, how knoweth this man letters, having never learned ? Jesus answered them, and said, *my doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.*" John 7. 15. 16. "As *the Father hath taught me, I speak these things.*" John 8. 28. "But ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, *which I have heard of God.*" John 8. 40. "The word which ye hear, *is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.*" John 14. 24.

Do you believe, my brethren, this testimony of Jesus Christ concerning himself—that the words which he spake, and the doctrine which he taught, were *not his*

own, but that he was dependent on the Father for them? Do you believe that Jesus gave this testimony without disguise—without reserve, and with the view to be understood? Are you not then constrained to believe, that he was not the original author of the doctrines which he preached? Whoever, then, ascribes these doctrines to Jesus Christ, as the author of them in the *first or highest sense*, must, I fear, be chargeable with the crime of impeaching his sacred veracity.

9th. *The priesthood of Christ furnishes a strong, if not a conclusive argument, in support of his inferiority to the Father.* He is thus exhibited in the character of Priest and High Priest—"The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, *thou art a Priest*, forever after the order of Melchizedek." Ps. 110. 4. "After the similitude of Melchizedek, there ariseth another Priest." Heb. 7. 15. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and *High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus*, who was faithful to him that appointed him." Heb. 3. 1, 2. "Seeing then we have a *great High Priest*, that is passed into the heavens, *Jesus the Son of God*, let us hold fast our profession." Heb. 4. 14.

The term *Priest* is properly applied to Christ, of whom the Priests, and particularly the High Priests, under the law, were types and figures. As it was the part of their office to transact important concerns between God and men, so, it belonged to the office of Christ, as High Priest, to transact the most interesting concerns between God his Father, and mankind as sinners. To this office he was appointed by his Father. In the faithful discharge of it, he "through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God," and "having obtained eternal redemption for us," he "is passed into the heavens," "now to appear in the presence of God for us."

Here let me ask, my brethren, will any of these representations apply to the *true God*? Was God ever a Priest after the order and similitude of Melchizedek? Was he ever appointed to this office by any being, to whom he was faithful in the discharge of the office? Did the true God ever offer himself to God in suffering

even unto death? Do not these things imply an utter impossibility? But they are all true in respect to Jesus Christ. Must it not be a certain fact, that he neither is, nor can be, the true God? That, in this sense, he is not God, may be inferred from the consideration,

10th. That *he was a man of prayer and of sorrow.* “Then saith he unto them (his disciples) *my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying. O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*” Matt. 26. 38. 39. “And he said, *Abba, Father*, all things are possible unto thee, *take away this cup from me.*” Mark 14. 26. “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain *to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*” Luke 6. 12. “Then said Jesus, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*” “And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*” Luke 23. 34. 46. “And now, *O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*” “*Holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are.*” John 17. 5. 11. “In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared.” Heb. 5. 7.

To whom, my hearers, did Jesus Christ pray, but to the one only living and true God, his Father—that Almighty Being, who was able to save him from death? But in doing this, did he pray *to himself*? This, you will say, is a supposition too preposterous to be admitted. Can it reasonably be supposed, then, that he is the true God? Does not prayer imply, in him who prays, inferiority to, and dependence on him, to whom the prayer is addressed? Besides, what can be more unjust—what more dishonourable to the Supreme God, than to represent him as praying to another person—as continuing all night in prayer to God—as praying to another person to bestow glory upon him—as praying with fear, accompanied with tears, and as commending,

in the article of death, his departing spirit into the hands of his Father? But if you do not think and speak thus dishonourably of the supreme and blessed God, you cannot surely believe that Jesus Christ is the supreme and blessed God.—Should you say that it was the lowest, or human nature of Christ, that prayed, and not his highest or divine nature, permit me to ask, whether, on supposition, he possessed two natures, the one human, and the other divine, *his human nature or soul* prayed to *his divine nature or soul*? But was this supposed *divine nature or soul, the Father of Christ*? Can a supposition be more unfounded than this? But if the supposed divine soul of Christ were not his Father, he could not have prayed to his own divinity, for he prayed to his Father. As then there is but one Supreme Divinity, the supposed supreme divinity of Christ seems evidently to be an imaginary thing. I would further inquire—will it be said that the supposed lowest, or human nature of Christ, had “glory with the Father before the world was?” If not, then it must have been the supposed highest or divine nature of Christ that prayed. “O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, *with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*” But if the supposed highest or divine nature of Christ did not pray to the Father, must we not believe that he possessed but one intellectual nature, soul or spirit? Are we not, indeed, constrained to believe this to be the case, from his dying prayer?—“Father, into thy hands I commend *my spirit.*” Do not the words evidently imply that he had *but one spirit*?

11th. That Jesus Christ is not the true God, may reasonably be inferred from the consideration, that *he was subject to violent and grievous temptations.* “Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness, *to be tempted of the devil.*” Matt. 4. 1. “And he was in the wilderness forty days *tempted of satan.*” Mark 1. 13. Luke 4. 2. “In that he himself hath suffered *being tempted.*” Heb. 2. 18. “For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: *but was in all points tempted like as we are.*” Heb. 4. 15.

Is this representation of Jesus Christ compatible with

the supposition that he is God supreme? Do you believe that the true God was ever led or "driven" into a wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil, or a wicked spirit, for the space of forty days? That he suffered by temptation, and that he was in all points tempted as we are? Do not your souls shrink from the suggestion as *horribly impious*? Can the blessed God be subject to temptations like those which our Lord endured! The idea is not only repugnant to reason, but expressly denied by scripture testimony. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; *for God cannot be tempted with evil*, neither tempteth he any man." James 1. 13.

12th. It seems to be evident, that Jesus Christ is not the true God, from the circumstance, that *he is the image of the true God*. "In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of *Christ, who is the image of God*, should shine unto them." 2 Cor. 4. 4. "*Who is the image of the invisible God.*" Col. 1. 15. "*The express image of his person.*" Heb. 1. 3.

As in Jesus Christ appeared the wisdom, the power, the truth, the holiness, the goodness and benevolence of God, he is with much propriety spoken of as the express image of his person, or *the impressed image of his substance*; for this seems to be an allusion to the image made by the impression of a seal upon the wax, on which it is impressed. But is it to be admitted that Jesus Christ is the same person, being, or substance, of whom or which he is the image? Can we conceive of an image, in any case, as being the same with the original, or the thing or person whom it resembles? In all cases they are distinct. Nor is it to be supposed that any image, however striking its resemblance to the thing or person represented by it, is equal to the thing or person represented. "God created man in his own image," "after the similitude of God." But no one infers from this, that man is the same being with, or equal to God. Nor could the inference be made, had man been created in *the express image* of God's person. Notwithstanding, then, Jesus Christ is the most immaculate and glorious image of the invisible God, we are not to suppose

that he is himself the invisible God, but inferior to him.

13th. Jesus Christ is "*the first born of every creature*"—"the beginning of the creation of God." Col. 1. 15. Rev. 3. 14.

Can this representation, my hearers, with any colour of propriety, be applied to the true God? Would it not be as impious as it is inconsistent, to speak of the true God as the first born of every creature, or the beginning of his own creation? Will you, to avoid the absurdity which these passages present, have recourse to the two supposed natures of Jesus Christ, and say that the passages under consideration respect his lowest nature, or humanity? A little reflection must convince you, I should think, that this expedient will afford you no relief. Was the humanity of Christ the first born of every creature, or the beginning of the creation of God? Was no creature born—did no part of God's creation exist before the birth of Christ, in the reign of Augustus Cesar? But if you say that the passages refer to the supposed *supreme divinity* of Christ, do you not reduce his *divinity* to *humanity*? A *derived supreme divinity*, although the beginning of the creation of God, is an absurdity too gross not to be seen, too palpable not to be felt.—No expedient can be available to the support of an erroneous and inconsistent theory. But the truth, that Jesus Christ is the first of the creation—the head of the creation of God—the first in dignity and glory next to the Great Supreme, needs no support but plain and simple truth itself.

14th. Permit me now, my brethren, to submit to your consideration several scripture testimonies, and remarks upon them, which seem utterly irreconcilable with the supposition that Jesus Christ is the true God. If possessed of this unrivalled character, must he not have had the disposal of the highest places in his mediatorial kingdom? But these places, according to his own unequivocal declaration, were not at his disposal. When the mother of Zebedee's children requested of Christ that her two sons might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on the left in his kingdom, his an-

swer was—"to sit on my right hand, and on my left, *is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*" Matt. 20. 23.

Can Jesus Christ be the true God, *if he is not independently and supremely good?* But he has assured us that *he does not possess this most excellent attribute.* "And behold, one came and said unto him, good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, *why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God.*" Matt. 19. 16. 17.

If Jesus Christ is the true God, *must he not possess, and, at all times, unlimited knowledge?* But does he claim the attribute of omniscience? Let his own testimony decide the question. "But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son, but the Father.*" Mark 13. 32. But "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts 15. 18.

If Jesus Christ is the true God, *could any person or being be greater, or even so great as himself?* But instead of being the greatest, or equal to the greatest person or being, he is, according to his own explicit declaration, *less than God his Father.* "*My Father is greater than I*"—"greater than all." John 14. 28—10. 29. Plain and decisive as this evidence is, that Jesus Christ is inferior to the true God, the evidence, if possible, receives additional strength from those passages which speak of him as *having a God, a head or superior, and as being the possession or property of God.* "I ascend to my God, and your God." John 20. 17. "*The God of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Eph. 1. 17. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and *the head of Christ is God.*" 1 Cor. 11. 3. "Ye are Christ's, and *Christ is God's*—(his property or possession)—"Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of *my God*, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of *my God*, and the name of the city of *my God*, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from *my God.*" Rev. 3. 12.

Can you believe that the true God ever died, and that he was raised from the dead by another person or being? But *Jesus Christ literally died, and was thus raised from the dead.* “*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and the foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death.*” “*He hath raised up Jesus again.*” Acts 2. 23, 24, and 13. 33. “*Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.*” “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that *God raised him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved.” Rom. 6. 4. and 10. 9.—Christ indeed says that he had power to lay down his life, and power to take it again. But this declaration will appear perfectly consistent with the fact, that *God raised him from the dead as the prime and original agent*, when it is considered that whatever power Christ possessed, was, according to his own testimony, *given him by his Father.* (Matt. 28. 18.) Besides, the laying down of his life and his taking it again, was in consequence of, and agreeable to, the command or appointment of God. “*This commandment have I received of my Father.*” This is a chief, and promiaent part of my commission.—As nothing in the above passages can, with any degree of propriety, be applied to the true God, “who only hath immortality, and is without variableness,” is not the conclusion unavoidable, that Jesus Christ is not the true God?

Can you believe that *the true God is, or ever will be, subject to any other person or being, or that he will ever give up his kingdom to another?* But Jesus Christ is subject to his Father, and will hereafter give up to his Father that kingdom which he has received from him. “*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father;* when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death. For he must put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under

him, it is manifest that *he* is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, *then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that did put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*" 1 Cor. 15. 24—28.

Jesus Christ has indeed always been subject to the true God, his Father. This has already been described by a variety of expression. Should further evidence of this fact be deemed needful, the following descriptions of Christ's character are, for that purpose, submitted to your consideration. He is described as God's *servant*, whom he hath *chosen*; as *faithful* to him who appointed him; as *inspired by God*; as *receiving the spirit* not by measure; as *given by God*, &c. Matt. 12. 18. Heb. 3. 2. John 3. 34.

Let me now, my hearers, request you to recollect and retain it in your minds, that, according to scripture testimony, Jesus Christ *is a man, and son of man*—that he is a person or being *distinct* from the true God—that he is *the Son of God*—that he came into the world *not to do his own will, but the will of his Father*—that he was *sent* by his Father—that he performed no works by an underived, or independent power, as "*of his own self he did nothing*"—that he *received commands* from the Father—that the doctrines which he taught were *not originally his own, but delivered* to him from the Father—that he was a *Priest—a High Priest*, in which character he transacted important and interesting concerns *between God his Father, and sinful men*—that he *prayed* to his Father—that he was *subject to violent and grievous temptations* from satan—that he is *the image* of the Supreme God—that he is *the beginning of the creation of God, the first born* of every creature—that he had *not the disposal of the highest places* in his kingdom—that he is *not supremely good*—that his knowledge is *not unlimited*—that his Father is *greater than himself*—that he *has a God, a head, or superior*—that he *died, and was raised from the dead by his Father*—that he is *subject to God, as his servant, his chosen, by faithfully obeying his Father, and by giving up* (hereafter) *the kingdom to God, even the Father, from whom he had received it.*

As none of these things are incident to the true God, but were all incident to, and characteristic of, Jesus Christ, must not the evidence, that Jesus Christ is not the true God, but inferior to him, be irresistibly conclusive to every inquisitive and unbiassed mind? In the view of this evidence, you will, of yourselves, judge what is truth. Nor will any of you be likely to judge amiss in relation to this plain and intelligible subject, with minds free from the bewildering “mysticism of human invention.”

The subject will now be closed by way of

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. If Jesus Christ is not the true God, it is to be inferred that *no name or title, ascribed to him in the Bible*, implies that he is truly and independently divine, or that he is God in any other, than in an inferior and subordinate sense. This inference is too plain and obvious to be questioned. And that Jesus Christ is God in an inferior sense only, seems clearly evident from the manner and circumstances accompanying the application to him of the highest names and titles by which he is known. Is he called *Immanuel*? But this name, the prophet Isaiah observes, should be given to a son, *who should be born of a virgin*. Is. 7. 14. The passage is applied to the birth of our Saviour, Matt. 1. 23. “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name *Immanuel*, which being interpreted, is, God with us.” As this title is applied to a son, a child born of a virgin, can it reasonably be supposed to be descriptive of the nature of Christ, and especially of a nature supremely divine? Was the Supreme God ever a son or a child? Can Jesus Christ, then, be the Supreme God? Or does the circumstance, that a magnificent name is applied to a son or child, imply that he is *self-existent and independent*?

Of this same child or son the prophet Isaiah observes, ch. 9, ver. 6, that “his name should be called *Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting*

Father, the Prince of Peace." But because this child or son should be known by these titles, does it follow, that this same child or son is the Supreme God? The supposition must appear, I should think, utterly unfounded, and especially when it is considered, that *he was to be placed "upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it,"* &c.; and that "*the zeal of the Lord of Hosts would perform this.*" Who was this Lord of Hosts but the Supreme God? But if *He* set the holy child Jesus upon David's throne and kingdom, must he not have been distinct from, and superior to the child?

The apostle John observes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God.*" John 1. 1. By *Word*, Jesus Christ is generally supposed to be meant. And I am willing to admit that this is really the case. But is it to be admitted that *the Word* who existed *with God*, and is called God, is *the Supreme God*? If so, does it not follow that there are *two Supreme Gods*? But to allow this, would be an impeachment of the truth of the one God, who cannot lie. To the question, which he proposes, "is there a God besides me?" he emphatically replies, "yea, there is no (supreme) God; I know not any." Is. 44. 8. He also expressly declares, "*there is no God (supreme) with me.*" Deut. 32. 39. This same Word, it is distinctly to be noticed, "*was made flesh,*" and exhibited "the glory as of the *only begotten* of the Father." Can these things with truth be said of the Supreme God, the Father of Jesus Christ? Can it then reasonably be admitted that Jesus Christ is the Supreme God?

Another application of the title of *God* to Jesus Christ is Heb. 1. 8. "But unto *the Son*, he saith, thy throne, *O God*, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore, God, even *thy God*, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Here you will particularly observe, that the person to whom the application of the title of God is made, is *the Son*; that because he loved

righteousness, and hated iniquity, he was *anointed* by another person or being who was *his God*, and that he was anointed above *his fellows*.—Was *the true God* ever anointed, and by one superior to himself? or by another being who was his God? Or can you believe that human beings may with propriety be called the fellows of the Supreme God! How then can Jesus Christ be the Supreme God?

But if Jesus Christ is not the Supreme God, *how could he “think it not robbery to be equal with God?”* Phil. 2. 6. In reply to this, it might with propriety be urged, that the passage is not correctly translated. But not to insist on this circumstance, it is pertinent to observe, that the apostle, in immediate connexion with the words above quoted, speaks of the *very person*, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, as being in *the form of God*, as making himself of *no reputation*—as *being made* in the likeness of men—as *becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*; and in consequence of this, as being *highly exalted by God*.—Could any of these things, my brethren, be incident to the Supreme God? Do you dare assert, or can you believe, that *the true and Supreme God* was ever the form of himself? That he was ever made in the likeness of man? That he was ever obedient to any being, or any God? That he died, and that after death God highly exalted him? Dare you then assert, or can you believe, that Jesus Christ is the Supreme God?

As I have heretofore particularly examined and submitted to your consideration, from the press, the other passages in which the name *God* and other *high titles* are ascribed to *Jesus Christ*, I shall here omit a particular examination of them. I will however just repeat the observation, that the application of this venerable name, and these high titles, to Jesus, is accompanied with such circumstances as to shew that they are to be understood, not in the supreme, but in *the inferior sense*. The application of the name *God* to angels and magistrates, occurs more frequently than the application of that name to Jesus. But does this circumstance furnish evidence that they are supreme divinities? What ev-

idence, then, does the application of this name to the man Christ Jesus, furnish, that he is the true God? If he were indeed the true God, how can the truth of his solemn declaration, that his Father is "*the only true God,*" be supported? Or what claim to our belief has the declaration of the only true God himself, that "*there is no God besides him?*"

2d. If Jesus Christ is not the true God, *the attributes and glory which he possesses cannot be his own in an underived and independent sense.* He must be dependent for them on some other, and a superior Being. The Supreme God is dependent on none—he receives from none—he gives to all. But we have seen, in some measure, from this discourse, that Jesus Christ *receives* from his Father, and is *therefore* dependent on him. The Father hath indeed "*given* all things into his hands"—hath *given* "unto him the spirit, not by measure"—"*anointed* him with the Holy Spirit, and with power"—"*given* unto him all power in heaven and in earth"—"*filled* him with wisdom"—"*hath given* him authority to execute judgment"—"*hath made* him both Lord and Christ"—"*appointed* unto him a kingdom"—"*gave* him the throne of his father David"—"*hath put* all things under his feet," and "*given* him honour and glory;" for it *pleased the Father*, that "in him should all fullness dwell," that he might be "the head of the body, the church," "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence."—Can we, my brethren, in the view of these testimonies, believe that the attributes and glory of Jesus Christ are underived, and independently his own? With whatever confidence you may hear it asserted that Jesus Christ is a self-existent and independent being, does it not become you to be slow of heart to believe the truth of the assertion, till you find the truth supported *by scripture testimony*? "*Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto men more than unto God, judge ye.*"

3d. If Jesus Christ is not the true God, *to acknowledge and worship him as the true God, must be derogatory not only of the Father, but highly displeasing to himself.* The honour of his Father he ever held in the highest estimation. It has ever been infinitely dear to

him. To do his will, and to exhibit and promote his glory, were the great objects of his ministry and pursuit, while on earth. He sought not "his own glory," but "His glory that sent him." When he was about to finish his course, he thus appealed to his Father, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest unto me." "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." He glorified his Father by acknowledging him to be the only true God; by praying unto him; by directing others to pray to him; by confessing his inferiority to his Father; by faithfully obeying the commands of his Father, and acknowledging his dependence upon him. *Thus Jesus Christ glorified his Father as the only true God.* Can you then suppose that you are to obtain the approbation and conciliate the favour of Jesus Christ, by ascribing to him supreme divinity, and worshipping him as the true God? May I not rather ask, whether you could, *in any way, more effectually dishonour him, and excite his holy resentment?* Can you suppose that Jesus Christ, who is meek and lowly in spirit, who never claimed supreme honour, nor said that he was God, will be pleased with such acknowledgments and practice in men, as virtually *impeach his truth, and transfer to himself that honour which is due to God only?* Surely we have not so learned Christ.

Jesus Christ is indeed "worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing, as *the lamb that was slain.*" "*At or in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,*" "whom God hath highly exalted," "*to the glory of God the Father.*" All the honour or worship given to Jesus Christ, is to the glory of the Supreme God. And it is worthy of special notice, that he is never proposed to us as the object of faith, but as *the son of man, the son of God, as the Lord Jesus, &c.* "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must *the son of man* be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life." "He that believeth on the Son, hath ever-

lasting life ; and he that believeth *not the Son*, shall not see life : but the wrath of God abideth on him." "Believe on *the Lord Jesus*, and thou shalt be saved." If then we would "believe to the saving of the soul," let Jesus Christ, as the son of man, the son of God, and as the Lord Jesus, be the *object of our faith*. In these characters let us confess him. In these characters let us honour and worship him.

4th. If Jesus Christ is not the true God, the supposition that he possesses *two distinct and opposite natures, the one perfectly human, and the other perfectly divine, has no foundation in truth*. A perfectly divine nature cannot surely belong to a person or being, who is not God in the highest sense. That Jesus Christ, in this sense, is not God, appears, it is believed, from this discourse. We cannot, therefore, admit the hypothesis of his two natures. If these two natures belong to Christ, must he not be *two persons*? Two souls, spirits, or minds, must, it should seem, constitute more than *one numerical person or existence*. But if Christ is but one person, can it reasonably be supposed that he possesses two souls, spirits or minds? If this were allowed to be the case, must not *this one and the same numerical person* have an existence which is *strictly eternal*, and which nevertheless began to exist in time ; which is *uncreated*, and yet *created* ; which is at once *independent and dependent* ; *immutable*, and yet *mutable* ; *omniscient*, and yet *limited in knowledge* ; *omnipotent*, and yet *limited as to power* ; *unchangeable*, and yet *subject to change* ; *immortal*, and yet *mortal* !*—

* That these *seeming*, and, as I believe, *real* contradictory representations, are not stated in a more glaring and repulsive manner, than statements made on the same subject by Trinitarian writers, the following extract from a Trinitarian work of considerable celebrity, will fully evince.

"1. That the *same person* should be the Creator, and yet a creature. Is not this wonderful ?

"2. That the Father of Eternity should be born in time. Is not this wonderful ?

"3. That the Mighty God should be a weak babe. Is not this wonderful ?

"4. That the virgin's womb should contain him, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. Is not this wonderful ?

"5. That he that had both father and mother, should have neither father nor mother. Is not this another thing in him very wonderful ?

"6. That he was before Abraham was born, and yet Abraham was born

Can these things be true, my brethren, of *one and the same person or being*? Did Jesus Christ ever say or intimate that he possessed a character of this description? Did he not include his whole intellectual or spiritual existence when he said, that of *his own self* he could do nothing—*my soul* is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death—Father, into thy hands I commend *my spirit*? Could he then be possessed of another, and omnipotent self, and of another spirit incapable of suffering? Besides, if Jesus Christ possessed the two natures under consideration, shall we not find it impossible to determine to which of these natures he refers, when he speaks of himself, or which of the natures is designated when he is spoken of by others! He never speaks of himself as God, nor does he ever claim supreme worship, as I have before observed. But if he possessed a nature supremely divine, is it not unaccountably strange that he should never have mentioned it, and in the plainest manner?—It may be pertinent also again to observe, that *some of the highest titles and dignities* by which he is known, are applied to him as a *child* that was *born*; as a *son* that was *given*; as *man*, and *son of man*.

From these considerations, are we not constrained to believe, that to Jesus Christ belongs but *one* spiritual or intellectual nature or existence, and that this one nature or existence is designated as well by *his highest*, as *his lowest names and titles*? With this hypothesis the scripture representation of Christ is consistent and intelligible. Without it, we may “ever be learning, and never be able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

5th. If Jesus Christ is not the true God, *it must be highly improper and unjust to represent and acknowledge him as “the only Redeemer and Saviour of mankind,”* or, “*as the sole object of our hope and confidence.*” A Re-

before him, about the space of two thousand years. Shall not this be accounted wonderful?

“8. That the wisdom and the word was an infant, that could not speak a word. Who with words can declare how great this wonder was?”

“9. Who can reckon up the wonders in him? He was omnipotent, and yet weak; infinite, and yet finite; invisible, and yet was seen; immortal, and yet did die; he was a most spiritual being, and yet had flesh, and blood, and bones. That he was God, what more glorious? That he was flesh, what more inglorious? That he was God in flesh, what more marvellous?”

deemer and Saviour, who is dependent on another being, and who himself prayed to that other being *to save him* from death, cannot surely be the sole or only object of hope and confidence as a Redeemer and Saviour. Is it not then surprising, that he should be thus represented by many of our fellow christians, who are esteemed sound in the faith ! It is a fact which seems not to have arrested general attention, or to have obtained general belief, that the term *Redeemer* is *never* applied to *Jesus Christ*, but *frequently* to *God the Father* ; and that the term *Saviour* is applied to *the Father* by way of *peculiar eminence*. God hath “exalted Christ to be a Saviour.” He hath raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus. “The Father sent the Son to be a Saviour.” But the Father is “*the only wise God our Saviour*”—“*the living God our Saviour*.” “The kindness and love of *God our Saviour* toward man appeared, by the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he shed on us abundantly, *through Jesus Christ our Saviour*. As God then is our *Supreme Saviour*, and as he saves us *through Jesus Christ our Saviour* ;—as he is also our *Supreme Redeemer*, ought we not to acknowledge him in these characters—to “rejoice in him as God our Saviour,” as “the rock of our salvation,” and as that Almighty, and all merciful Being, who “bath visited and redeemed his people ?” But while we are to acknowledge, rejoice, and confide in the great God as our Saviour and Redeemer, we should never be unmindful that Jesus Christ is the glorious *medium* of redemption and salvation. “There is,” indeed, “none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” “He is of God made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his (God’s) grace.”—*This very marked and obvious distinction between God and Christ as Saviour and Redeemer*, has a strong claim to our special regard. It should influence our faith, and regulate our devotional and religious conduct.

6th. If Jesus Christ is not the Supreme God, *we find a place and office for him as mediator*. A mediator between God and man, must be a person *distinct* from

the parties between whom he mediates. Nor can we form a distinct and intelligible idea of a mediator, who does not sustain this character. Is it conceivable, my brethren, that God does, or can perform the work of mediation between himself and man? And is it not equally inconceivable that man does, or can perform the work of mediation between himself and God? How then can Jesus Christ sustain, and discharge the office of mediator between God and man, if he himself is God in the highest sense? Is not this impossible, unless he can mediate between himself and man? But as you must perceive that this supposition implies an absurdity, must you not admit that Jesus Christ is not the true God, but inferior to him? This being admitted, the character of the mediator, and the doctrine of mediation, appear intelligible and luminous. But if, on the other hand, we consider Jesus Christ as the Supreme God, or the same being with the Supreme God the Father, where shall we look for "the mediator of the new covenant," the "one mediator between God and men?" But if we look in vain for a mediator, must we not in vain hope to "receive the promise of eternal inheritance?" For this, and "all the promises of God in him (Jesus the mediator,) are, yea, and in him amen unto the glory of God."

I pray you, my brethren, very seriously to examine this important and interesting subject, that you may attain to a clear and satisfactory knowledge of the truth with respect to Jesus, our merciful high priest, and glorious mediator.

7th. If Jesus Christ is not the Supreme God, but inferior to him, does not the supposition, *that he is so united to the Supreme Father as to become one numerical being or God with him, imply not only an inexplicable mystery, but an utter impossibility?* Is not such a union between the Supreme God, and another person or being inferior to him, as to constitute them but one being or God, inconceivable? The supposition must, it is believed, be rejected as superlatively extravagant, unless it be rational and consistent to admit that *inferiority and superiority are equivalent terms*, and that *two distinct minds, consciousnesses, and wills, are but*

one mind, one consciousness, one will. Nor would the supposition, that Jesus Christ is a person or being *equal* with the Father, relieve this extravagant supposition of any difficulty. The supposition, that Jesus Christ is strictly equal with the Father, implies that *the Father has no existence*; for the existence of two supreme persons is impossible—equally impossible as the existence of two Supreme Gods. But were there no absurdity in admitting the existence of two supreme persons, each distinct from the other, yet is the supposition admissible that *two supremes* are but *one supreme*? That *two self-existences*, are but *one self-existence*? That *two omnipotences* are but *one omnipotence*? That *two omnisciences* are but *one omniscience*? &c. Do you not revolt, by brethren, at the bare statement of these absurdities? To what source, then, is the theory to be traced which embraces them. but to “science, falsely so called,” to spurious “philosophy, vain deceit, and the tradition of men?”

Jesus Christ has indeed declared, “*I and my Father are one.*” But this oneness, according to his own explanation of the subject, is directly repugnant to the oneness above stated. So far from saying, or even intimating, that he and his Father were *one being or God*, he carefully guarded against such a construction of his words in thus praying for, and speaking of his people: “*Holy Father, keep, through thine name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are*”—“*that they may be one, even as we are one*”—“*that they also may be one in us.*” If real Christians are, or may be one, even as Christ and his Father are one, is it not a truth too plain to be denied, or even doubted, that the oneness between him and his Father is *of a moral nature, implying union in heart, affection, and pursuit.* As Christians can be one in this sense only, so, it cannot reasonably be questioned that this is the oneness which exists between Christ and the Father. Christians not only are, or may be *one between themselves*, as Christ and the Father are one, but *one also both in, or with Christ and the Father.* “*That they also may be one in us.*” Do not these circumstances furnish demonstrative evidence, that the oneness be-

tween Christ and the Father does not denote that they are one being or God?—"He that planteth and he that watereth, are one." Husband and wife "are not twain, but one flesh." Christians "are all one in Christ Jesus." But were Paul and Apollos *one man*? Are husband and wife *one numerical body*? Are all Christians *one person*? Who does not immediately perceive the absurdity of the supposition? But is the supposition, that Jesus Christ and his Father are one God, less glaringly absurd? Nothing but a blind attachment to a blind theory, can, it is believed, prevent this gross incongruity from being clearly seen and understood "of all men."

8th. If Jesus Christ is not the Supreme God, it is obvious to observe, that *the arguments, employed to prove his supreme divinity, are not merely inconclusive, but destitute of any real force.* Although some of them may, to a superficial view, seem specious, yet duly considered, they must appear unfounded. As one of the principal arguments, urged in support of his supreme divinity, is deduced from his miraculous works, as I have before noticed, let us examine its supposed pertinency and force. Should we find upon its very face, in capitals, the inscription of TEKEL, it may be presumed that the arguments drawn from other sources to support the supreme divinity of Christ, will be found wanting, when "weighed in an even balance."—The argument drawn from miracles is this—"Jesus Christ, during his ministry, cured the most inveterate diseases; restored sight to the blind; made the maimed to be whole, and raised the dead to life. These were achievements beyond the limits of human agency, or power. Therefore Jesus Christ must, in the supreme sense, have been God."—This argument would undoubtedly be conclusive, were it true that Jesus Christ wrought these miracles by *an undervied and independent power.* But was this the real fact? The supposition that it was so, and the positive assertions which are so often made to support the supposition, will not be likely to carry conviction to the minds of those who duly appreciate *divine testimony.* This testimony, we have seen, is direct and explicit in ascribing the miracu-

lous works, which Christ performed, not to his own independent power ; but to *the power of the one God, the Father*. That this *essential circumstance* should have been disregarded by those who advocate the doctrine of Christ's omnipotence, is not a little surprising. To deny that the power, which Christ possessed and exercised, was "*given unto him*," must evince disrespect and even contempt of the highest authority, and an infatuated attachment to human theory and tradition. In what estimation, then, are we to hold the inference, from the miracles of Christ, that he is the Lord God Omnipotent ! Suppose, my brethren, you were told that the apostles of our Lord were omnipotent ; that this doctrine is essential to the Christian system, and that firmly to believe it, is necessary to salvation—would you be prepared to give your assent to these preposterous assertions ? But did not the apostles work as stupendous miracles as those which were wrought by Jesus Christ ? Were not *their* miracles, indeed, *more stupendous* ? "He that believeth on me," said the faithful and true Witness, "the works that I do, shall he do also ; and *greater works than these*." This declaration appears to have been verified by the cure of the sick from "*the shadow of Peter*" falling on them ; and by the cures performed by "*the handkerchiefs and aprons*" which had touched the body of Paul. But if you are not to believe that the apostles of our Lord were omnipotent, notwithstanding they wrought these astonishing miracles, what warrant have you to believe that the miracles of Jesus Christ prove him to be omnipotent ? If, then, to ascribe omnipotence to the apostles, would in the highest degree be unreasonable and presumptuous, are you under no apprehension, that to ascribe omnipotence to Jesus Christ, would be as *really* unreasonable and presumptuous ? And if it be reasonable to admit, that to believe the apostles were omnipotent, would rather obstruct than promote the salvation of your souls, is there no reason to apprehend that the salvation of your souls would be rather obstructed than promoted by believing that Jesus Christ is the independent and almighty God ! *You will decide for yourselves.*

In conclusion, permit me, my brethren, to ask, "what

think ye of Christ?" As this question is very highly interesting and momentous, it demands your very serious consideration. And most earnestly do I entreat you to give all diligence to ascertain what should be the proper answer. Let your minds be deeply impressed with the solemn truth, that it is as well *eternal life* "to know Jesus Christ who was sent into the world, as to know the Father to be the only true God, who sent him." And as you would hope to come to the knowledge of this great and salutary truth, let the sure word of prophecy be your instructor. If from this source of instruction you find no precept or command to believe that Jesus Christ is the supreme and self-existent God, or that he is a person co-eternal, co-equal and consubstantial with God the Father, or that he is one of three infinite persons in the Godhead, or that he possessed two infinitely different natures or spiritual existences, one uncreated, and the other created, and that these two natures, connected with a human body, constitute but one person—"If from the Holy Scriptures you find no precept or command to believe that Jesus Christ" is such a person or being, must you not be constrained to believe and acknowledge him, according to the plain and intelligible testimony of Scripture, to be *the Son of God, the Christ, the one mediator between God and man, through whom* forgiveness of sins, and the inheritance of eternal life, are to be obtained? As "these things are written" in the Sacred Volume, "that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name," let us, rejecting "philosophy and vain deceit," cling to this precious doctrine—this "*saving truth*." "He that *believeth* on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth *not* the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." *Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief.*

Let us, Christian brethren, "strive together for the faith of the gospel." In this faith it becomes us "greatly to rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, we are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of our faith, being more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found

unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ ; whom having not seen, let us love ; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, let us rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ; that we may receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. *Amen.*

SERMON III.

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE

OF THE

HOLY SPIRIT.

ACTS, 5. 3. *Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit ?** (Part of the ver.)

THE context informs us that “a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet,” to be distributed to “every man” in the christian community, “according as he had need.” This offering Ananias made as the full price of the possession. The apostle Peter, through special divine interposition, perceiving that he had uttered a falsehood, addressed him in the monitory language of the text, “Why hath satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?” Why hast thou suffered thine heart to be filled with the devices of satan? Or why hast thou suffered thyself to be induced, by covetousness, to disregard the truth, and lie to the Holy Spirit? Your conduct is inexcusable; your crime is very great. The tragical result of this his impious conduct, in his immediate death, cannot have escaped your recollection. May it ever duly affect your minds, and influence your conduct.

Although the instigation of satan, the criminal conduct of man, and his consequent accountability with respect to lying, are topics naturally suggested by the text, yet I shall decline the discussion of *them*, and endeavour to ascertain what is implied in the phrase “*Holy Spirit.*”

* As the word *Pneuma*, often translated by the almost obsolete word “*Ghost*,” is frequently translated by the more familiar word “*Spirit*,” I have taken the liberty, for the sake of uniformity, to use *this* word instead of *that* in the following discourse!

This subject you must consider as highly interesting and important. Should the investigation of it be attended with difficulty, this circumstance, instead of checking, ought to excite us to more diligent inquiry, and careful research in relation to it. Subjects which are very plain and easy to be understood, require but little investigation; but those which are obscure and difficult, require more close and critical examination. And reasonably may we expect, from such examination, to obtain much light and satisfaction with respect to the most obscure and difficult subjects contained in the word of God. We should, however, always bear it in mind, that it becomes us seriously to deliberate on such subjects, and impartially to weigh them in "an even balance," before we make up our minds respecting them; and that it is the part of wisdom to express our sentiments "with meekness and fear." Much assurance does not exhibit the best evidence of deep research, and the most correct knowledge. Nor are bold and peremptory assertions to be identified with luminous reasoning and solid argument.

As the subject of investigation now before us is thought, and not without reason, to be a difficult one, may I not presume that you will hear it discussed with a spirit of candour, and that if any sentiments should be suggested, the truth of which you may consider as doubtful, you will not hastily reject them as erroneous, but carefully examine, and test them by the infallible standard of truth, the word of God.

As the subject has been but little investigated by religious instructors and theological writers, and as those who have expressed, and published their opinions respecting it, have too generally used bewildering words and phrases of human invention, a lucid and *scriptural* exhibition of it, is deemed seasonable and highly important. Such an exhibition of the subject, will be humbly attempted in the following discourse.

You are not insensible, my brethren, that it is supposed by many Christians who are esteemed sound in the faith, that *Holy Spirit*, or *Spirit of God* imports a *distinct person*, or *agent*, *equal in power and glory to God the Father*. Whether this hypothesis admits

of support from scripture testimony, is the principal subject of our inquiry.

In pursuing this inquiry I shall endeavour to shew,

I. That *Holy Spirit* is a synonymy for God himself.

II. That the supposition that the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from God, is inconsistent with his supposed supreme divinity.

III. That *Holy Spirit* is to be understood in several different senses.

1st. *Holy Spirit* is a synonymy for God himself—or is the one Supreme God.

As the names *God*, *Lord*, *Lord God*, are applied to the Supreme Being, so the "*Holy Spirit*," "*the Spirit of God*," "*the Spirit of the Lord*," and "*the Spirit of the Lord God*," denote, it is believed, the same Supreme Being. "*God is a spirit*," and He is "*Holy*"—"the high and lofty One, whose name," in the highest sense, "*is Holy*." Must He not then be "*The Holy Spirit*?" *The spirit of a man*, you must be sensible, is often used in the Scriptures, as synonymous with *man himself*. "*The spirit of Pharaoh was troubled*." "*The spirit of Jacob revived*." By these phrases we are to understand that the *person* of Pharaoh was troubled, and that the *person* of Jacob revived. "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit*," imports precisely the same thing with the following benediction, "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you*." "*My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour*," signifies the same with *I have rejoiced in God my Saviour*. "*Your spirit*," means the same with *you*. As then *the spirit of a man*, is but another expression for *man himself*, is it not reasonable to suppose that the *spirit of God* denotes *God himself*?

Elihu observes, "*the spirit of God hath made me*." Job, 33. 4. But are we here to understand that a person or agent distinct from God himself was Elihu's Creator? It cannot reasonably be questioned that *God, the Maker of all things*, is here intended. In the passage of our text, Peter charges Ananias with the crime of lying to "*the Holy Spirit*;" yet in the verse following, the apostle observes that he had "*lied to God*." But are we to

suppose that the inspired penman meant to convey the idea that Ananias had lied to two distinct and supreme persons or beings? The supposition is too extravagant to be admitted. By lying to the Holy Spirit he lied to God, who is Himself the Holy Spirit. That God and his Spirit are not two, but one numerical person or being, is strikingly evident from the following passages: "Whither shall I go *from thy Spirit*? If I ascend up into heaven, *thou art there*; if I make my bed in hell, *thou art there*." Ps. 139. 7, 8. The Spirit of God, or God himself, is in every place, so that his presence cannot be avoided. "The things of God knoweth no man, but *the Spirit of God*." 1 Cor. 2. 12. The things which God hath "revealed, belong unto us and to our children forever, but the secret things belong unto himself." He hath reserved them in his own power. These things are known to none but *his Spirit*, or his own *Person*. In other words, God alone is acquainted with his own unrevealed purposes. "But they (the Israelites) rebelled, and vexed *his Holy Spirit*; therefore *He* was turned to be their enemy, and *He* fought against them." Isa. 63. 10. The Holy Spirit whom the Israelites vexed was that very person or being, who, in consequence of their rebellion, became their enemy and fought against them; and *He*, as appears from ver. 16, was the "*Lord their Father and Redeemer*." The Spirit of God therefore is *God himself*.

In several passages we find the Holy Spirit represented as speaking *by* or *through the prophets*, under the Old Testament dispensation. "Well spake the Holy Spirit by *Esaias the prophet* unto our fathers, saying," &c. "This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, *which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas*." "As the Holy Spirit saith to day if ye will hear his voice." Acts, 28. 25, and 1. 16. Heb. 3. 7.—By comparing these, with other similar passages in which *God* or the *Lord* is represented as *speaking by or through his prophets*, we shall find strong, and, I should think, satisfactory evidence, that by *Holy Spirit* in these instances, we are to understand *God himself*.

Under the New Testament dispensation, we find several examples of *the Holy Spirit as speaking*. The following I submit to your consideration. “Now *the Spirit speaketh* expressly, that in the latter times some should depart from the faith.” “*The Spirit said unto Philip.*” “As they ministered unto the Lord and fasted, *the Holy Spirit said*, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I have called them.*” “Save that *the Holy Spirit witnesseth* in every city, *saying* that bonds and afflictions abide me.” 1 Tim. 4. 1. Acts 8. 29. and 13. 2. and 20. 23. When it is considered that God, or the Lord, is represented in the Old Testament Scriptures as speaking unto Adam, Moses and the prophets, and giving them commands, does it not appear probable, that *the Holy Spirit*, in the passages above quoted, is used for *God himself*? If the Holy Spirit is not a person or being *distinct* from God, must we not infer that when *He* is represented as *speaking, commanding* and *witnessing*, we are to refer these actions to *the one Supreme God*?

That *the Holy Spirit* is but another name for *God*, in the following passages, is highly probable. “And it was revealed unto him (Simeon) by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.” Luke 2. 26. “And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing unto every man severally as he will.” 1 Cor. 12. 6.—11. “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.” Eph. 4. 30.

If, in these, and several other similar passages which I have omitted, we should substitute the word *God*, for *Holy Spirit*, would not the sense be easy, natural and complete; and would not the reading be perfectly con-

sonant to the *usual manner and style of Scripture*? Is not God alone the great and original Revealer of things and events? He alone "hath put the times or seasons in his own power." "The secret things belong to the Lord our God." "Of him, and through him, are all things." Notwithstanding, then, *the Holy Spirit* revealed it to Simeon that he should not die before he had seen Christ, *God*, it should seem, must have been the *Revealer*. And notwithstanding the apostle ascribes the various supernatural gifts with which his cotemporary Christians were endowed, to the agency of *the Spirit*, yet he assures us that "it is *the same God* which worketh all in all."—The admonition "Grieve not *the Holy Spirit* of God," is, I should think, precisely of the same import with, grieve not *the heart* of God, or *God himself*.

That the Holy Spirit is indeed God, and in the supreme sense, but few Christians, probably, will deny. Whatever may be the clashing of their opinions on other subjects, they generally agree that Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God, is equivalent to the term God. Yet by many it is believed that the Holy Spirit is *distinct* from, although a person, or agent equal to God. This distinction is by others supposed to owe its origin to mere human invention. And that this is really the case, must be evident, if we establish the truth of our second proposition, which is,

II. The supposition that the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from God, is inconsistent with his supposed supreme divinity.

In attempting to establish the truth of this proposition by scripture passages, in which the Holy Spirit is mentioned, I would not be understood as maintaining, that in these passages, *Holy Spirit* implies *personal existence* in a strict and literal sense. There is much reason to believe that the words are synonymous with the *supernatural influence* of God, *personified*. But as they are by many supposed to express personality, or personal existence, it will be my object to show that this supposition is inconsistent with the supposed supreme divinity of the Spirit.

That the Holy Spirit, on the supposition that he is a distinct person from God, must be subordinate, or inferior to him, is evident, it is believed, from the following representations. "I will pray the Father, and he shall *give* you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will *send* in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14. 16, 17, and 25, 26. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will *send* unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." John 15. 26, 27. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will *send* him unto you." "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for *he shall not speak of himself*; but whatsoever he shall *hear*, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for *he shall receive of mine*, and shall shew it unto you." John 16. 7. 13, 14. "And we are his witnesses of these things: and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God hath *given* to them that obey him." Acts 5. 32. "The Spirit itself maketh *intercession* for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"—"for the saints according to the *will of God*." Rom. 8. 26, 27.

These passages are frequently produced and relied on as furnishing strong proof of the personality of the Holy Spirit. Nor can it be denied, that, at first view, they seem to support this doctrine. Accordingly it has been inferred from them by some writers of distinguished talents, that the Holy Spirit is really a person distinct from the one Supreme God, but inferior to, and dependent on him. By many others it is supposed that the

passages under consideration prove, not only that the Holy Spirit is distinct from God, but equal to him in power and glory. Although the first mentioned of these opinions appears specious, it does not, probably, admit of support. But the latter opinion does not, I think, appear even plausible.

Can it reasonably be supposed, my brethren, that if the Holy Spirit, in the passages above quoted, were a person distinct from, and yet equal to God the Father, he would be represented as a *gift*, or *given of God* as a Comforter to the disciples of Christ? The Supreme God the Father *gives to all*, but *is given and can be given by none*. Must not the *Giver* be superior to the *gift*? This same Comforter, or the Holy Spirit, is also represented as sent. "Whom the Father shall send in my name," the name of Christ. But is not the person *who sends* supposed to be superior to, and exercising authority over the person, *who is sent*?—It is further to be observed, that the Spirit, or Comforter, is represented not only as sent by the Father, but also by *Jesus Christ* and as *receiving and taking of him*. "I," said Christ to his disciples, "will send him unto you," and "he shall receive of mine—shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." As the Holy Spirit was sent by Christ, and received somewhat of him, must he not, if a real person, have been *inferior*, as well to him, as to the Father? It is further asserted that the Spirit "should not speak of himself, but whatsoever he should hear, that he should speak." Can any words more unequivocally express dependence and inferiority than this representation? Should the Holy Spirit, then, in the passages now under consideration, be considered as a *person*, must it not be inferred that his existence *is derived and dependent*?

These observations are not designed as proof that Holy Spirit never implies personal existence. We have already seen that we are sometimes to understand, by Holy Spirit, the person of the Supreme God himself. But they are designed to shew, that, contrary to the opinion of many of our Christian brethren, we are not to consider *Holy Spirit*, in the passages last quoted, as

implying a person distinct from, and equal to the Supreme God. We are not indeed to suppose that the Spirit is, in any of them, represented as possessing personal existence. It hardly admits, I am persuaded, of a doubt, that in these passages *the supernatural influence of God is personified, or represented as a person* under the names of *the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth*. Nor will it appear strange or unnatural, that this influence should be represented as a person, when we consider that personification is a figure common to all languages, and that almost every thing and event with which we are acquainted, is represented as a person—as speaking and acting as a person. This mode of speech abounds in the Scriptures. We are indeed ourselves in the habit of very frequently using it. How often do we say, *my reason tells me* that this is right or wrong; *conscience speaks*; *it accuses*, or *excuses*; *my inclination solicits*; *my heart condemns*, or *acquits*; *actions speak* louder than words. Of Divine Providence also we say, *it wills, directs, governs, &c.* These examples I mention only as a specimen of the frequent and almost perpetual use we make of the figure of speech called personification. Is it not then perfectly natural, that the special influence of God should be personified or represented as a spiritual being or person?

But whether we admit or reject the idea that special divine influence denotes the Holy Spirit, or whatever diversity of opinion may exist among us on points of minor importance, must we not all be united in sentiment with reference to this great and *fundamental truth*, that the Scriptures most clearly attribute to *the one Supreme God the Father*, as their *original Author*, whatever of spiritual aid, peace, comfort, and wisdom, is bestowed through Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit? “He is the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation.” “He is the Father of mercies, and the very God of peace.” “The God of all grace,” “who giveth us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,” and who “worketh all in all.”

We are to show in the third place,

III. That the *Holy Spirit* is to be understood in several different senses.

That these terms are synonymous with God himself, and that special divine influence is sometimes personified, or expressed by the terms Holy Spirit, has, it is believed, been shewn under the first and second propositions. And that the terms *Spirit*, *Holy Spirit*, &c. are used in *several other senses*, the following scripture passages and observations will clearly evince.

1st. *Spirit of God*, or *Holy Spirit*, denotes *power*, or *power of God*. "If I with the *finger of God* cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." Luke 11. 20. "If I cast out devils *by the Spirit of God*, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Matt. 12. 28. "Behold, I send *the promise of the Father*; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with *power from on high*." Luke 24. 49. "Being assembled together with them, (Jesus) commanded them (the apostles) that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for *the promise of the Father*, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the *Holy Spirit* not many days hence." Acts 1. 4, 5.—That *finger of God*, and *Spirit of God*, in the parallel passages first quoted, are explanatory of each other, and import the same thing, will not, it is presumed, be questioned. It is equally evident, that being *endued with power from on high*, means the same thing with being *baptized with the Holy Spirit*.

"*The Holy Spirit* shall come upon thee, and *the power of the Highest* shall overshadow thee." Luke 1. 35. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with *the Holy Spirit* and with *power*." Acts 10. 38.—In these, and several other similar passages, it is highly probable, if not certain, that the *Holy Spirit* is explained by the word *power*. But should this be questioned, it cannot, I think, be reasonably supposed that Holy Spirit, in any of the passages above quoted, denotes a person, or distinct personal existence.

Many other passages of Scripture might be produced, in which *Spirit of God* seems to import the same thing as in the passages just reviewed. But as I wish not, needlessly, to multiply passages, I shall pass them without further notice.

2d. *The Holy Spirit* is not unfrequently represented as *poured out* and *shed forth*, &c. "On the Gentiles was *poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit*." Acts 10. 45. "The Holy Spirit which God hath *shed on us abundantly*." Tit. 3. 5, 6. "Jesus, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, hath *shed forth this, which ye now see and hear*." Acts 2. 33. "While Peter yet spake these words, the *Holy Spirit fell on them* which heard the word." Acts 10. 44. "And as I began to speak, the *Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning*." Acts 11. 15. "He (Christ) shall baptize you with the *Holy Spirit*." Matt. 3. 11. "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the *Holy Spirit*." Acts 1. 5. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth, with the *Holy Spirit and with power*." Acts 10. 38.

In these, and several other similar passages, *Holy Spirit* seems evidently to import something widely different from the idea we form of a *person*, or *personal existence*. Can it reasonably be admitted, or can it be conceived, that a person, and especially a self-existent and independent person, can be *poured out as a gift*, and *shed forth* on human beings? In these representations we can find nothing which agrees with, or can with propriety be applied to a person. Besides, a *self-existent and independent person* cannot, with any colour of propriety, be represented as a gift, as poured out and shed forth *by another person*. But as these representations are made of the Holy Spirit, the conclusion seems unavoidable, that in the passages under consideration, the phrase, *Holy Spirit*, does not denote a person. Must it not then denote *extraordinary gifts and qualifications*? When the Holy Spirit was shed forth upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, they were endued with extraordinary knowledge, and with the gift of tongues. This was noticed by the multitude present. They saw and heard the apostles exercising these wonderful gifts and qualifications. And seeing and hearing *this*, they saw and heard *that which was shed forth*, viz. the *Holy Spirit*, which the Father had promised.—It will not be considered impertinent in this connexion to observe, that, notwithstanding the Holy Spirit is poured

out and shed forth abundantly, yet it is not *wholly* poured out or shed forth. There is a *residue*—an *inexhaustible residue*, with God. “He has the residue of the Spirit.” If a person were capable of being poured out or shed forth, and if this were in fact the case, must not the *whole person* be poured out or shed forth? The supposition that a *real person* is poured out or shed forth *partially* or *only in part*, implies too gross an absurdity not to be seen, and immediately rejected. As the figure is essentially the same, where the Holy Spirit is represented as falling upon men, and where persons are said to be *baptized* and *anointed* with the Spirit, it will be sufficient to observe, that the representation must be considered as incompatible with the idea that the Spirit is a person, and especially an independent person. Surely you must revolt at the idea, that an infinite person ever fell upon finite beings, or that such beings were ever baptized or anointed with an *infinite person*, and by the *agency of another person*.

3d. *The Holy Spirit* is a phrase which sometimes signifies a *constraining* or *impelling influence*. “Then was Jesus *led up of the Spirit* into the wilderness.” Matt. 4. 1. “Immediately the Spirit *driveth* him into the wilderness.” Mark 1. 12. “As many as are *led by the Spirit of God*, they are the sons of God.” Rom. 8. 14. “If ye are *led by the Spirit*, ye are not under the law.” Gal. 5. 18.

Our Lord, immediately after his baptism, before he began his ministry, was, by a *strong inward impulse*, brought into a wilderness, or a desert place. This seems to be the meaning of the expression, *led up of the Spirit*. St. Mark expresses it by the *Spirit’s driving him into the wilderness*. The natural and obvious import of this expression is, that a constraining or impulsive divine influence very strongly and effectually induced him to repair to a desert place. Simply to be led by the Spirit of God, probably means nothing more than to be actuated and governed by divine impression made upon the mind or heart.

4th. By *Holy Spirit* is meant *good things*, or *gifts*, in a general sense. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more

shall your heavenly Father give *the Holy Spirit* to them that ask him?" Luke 11. 13. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give *good things* to them that ask him?" Matt. 7. 11.—The parallelism of these passages is too evident to be disputed. But is it not equally evident that *the Holy Spirit*, in the former passage, is perfectly synonymous with *good things* in the latter? "He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not *the Spirit by measure* unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given *all things* into his hand." John 3. 34, 35.—In Scripture language, to do, or give a thing *by measure*, is to do it sparingly. Therefore, what is said here, signifies that God gave the Spirit to Jesus in the most abundant manner. And may not *this* be of the same import with the Father's "*giving all things into his hand*," and with "*all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge being hid*," or laid up "*in him*?" As then it is evident that *the gift of the Spirit* sometimes signifies *the bestowment of good things*, who can say but this is *always* the import of the expression, either in a general or more limited sense? But however this may be, it cannot reasonably be questioned, that the expression *Holy Spirit*, in these and other similar passages, intends something very distinct from personal existence.

5th. *Spirit*, or *Holy Spirit*, is used in Scripture to denote the *Inspiration of God*. The Greek word *Pneuma*, translated *Spirit*, signifies *a breathing*. Nor is there any impropriety in employing the term to denote divine inspiration, or breathing *into a person or thing*. When Jesus, by the appointment of the Father, imparted miraculous powers to his disciples, he said unto them, "peace be unto you. And when he had said this, he *breathed on them*, and saith unto them, *receive ye the Holy Spirit*." John 20. 21, 22. This was a figure of their receiving the Holy Spirit, which, as we read Acts 2. 2. came upon them with the sound as of a *rushing wind*. By a breath, or breathing, the spirit of life was originally imparted to man. "The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,

and man became a living soul." So, by a breath or breathing, the disciples of our Lord received the Holy Spirit, or an assurance of receiving it, that is, a communication of extraordinary knowledge, wisdom, power. In this sense the word Spirit is frequently used in the Scriptures. It seems to be thus used with reference to Joseph, Daniel, and others in whom was "the Spirit of God," insomuch that none were "so discreet and wise," and possessed "light and understanding and wisdom" as they. In several passages of the New Testament, persons are represented as possessing a plenitude of the Holy Spirit, or as being *full* of the Holy Spirit. "And they were all *filled* with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2. 4. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all *filled* with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness." Acts 4. 31. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but *be filled* with the Spirit." Eph. 5. 18. "He (John) shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and he shall be *filled* with the Holy Spirit." "And Elizabeth was *filled* with the Holy Spirit." "And Zacharias was *filled* with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied." Luke 1. 15, 41, 67.

Will you say, my brethren, or can you believe, that *filled with the Holy Spirit*, implies that the persons mentioned in these passages were *filled with the person of God*, or with any other intelligent *being* or *person*? If a divine person were literally in them, must not the *whole* of that person have been in them? You cannot, it is presumed, conceive of God, or a person, who is purely a spirit, as divisible into parts. But do you not find it equally difficult to conceive that the person of God—his *whole person*, should be contained within the narrow limits of finite persons or beings! Must not the phrase, then, *filled with the Spirit*, denote the *Inspiration of God*, or the *communication of extraordinary knowledge, gifts, or powers*? That this is indeed the meaning of the phrase, appears highly probable, if not unquestionably certain, from the consideration that

the terms *filled*, and *full*, are used in the Scriptures to denote the existence of, or *endowment with mere qualities, properties, or dispositions*.—Persons are said to have been “filled with knowledge,” “wisdom,” “comfort,” “joy,” “grace and truth,” “goodness,” “fruits of righteousness,” “good works and alms deeds,” &c. The persons thus represented, we are to consider as having, in a high degree, been endowed with, or possessed of knowledge, wisdom, comfort, &c. This view of the subject is perfectly natural. To possess these qualities in an eminent degree, is consistent with the nature and capacity of man. It is a fact, that many persons have, in this degree, possessed them. Nor is there any incongruity in saying, that they are *filled* with these qualities. But to say of any human being, that *he is filled with, or full of the person of God*, is manifestly absurd. It supposes a fact which is not within the limits of possibility.

The phrase *filled with the Spirit*, implies, that the person filled is a *recipient*, or that *he receives the Spirit*. Agreeably we find, in several passages of Scripture, persons are said to receive the Holy Spirit. Two of these passages, as sufficient to my purpose, I submit to your consideration. “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should *receive*; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given.” John 7. 38, 39. “He said unto them, have ye *received* the Holy Spirit since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit.” Acts 19. 2.

In reference to the passage quoted from the gospel of St. John, it is obvious to observe, that it relates to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon men. *Pouring out*, implies a comparison to *water*. Jesus represented the benefits and fruits of *the gifts of the Spirit*, under the image of a river flowing out of the belly or midst of a believer. By this he indicated, as well the pure pleasures which these gifts produce, as their beneficent effects to others, who come within their influence.

The most natural, and the only consistent import of the passage seems to be, that believers would be so filled with spiritual gifts, that they would not be able to contain them within themselves; that they would issue from them as a stream from a fountain, for the benefit of others.—The Holy Spirit is with much propriety called *living water*, because it is the earnest or pledge of *eternal life*. The faculty of speaking all the different languages in the then known world, which was the first gift of the Spirit, qualifying the apostles and other believers to preach the doctrines of the gospel, both watered themselves, and enabled them to water the Gentiles, not with small streams, but with copious rivers of divine and saving knowledge. The Holy Spirit, or miraculous gifts, were not, at this time, thus abundantly imparted to the apostles of our Lord. It was not until the day of Pentecost that they were, in this extraordinary manner, endued with power from on high.

The passage from Acts, claims particular attention. When Paul thus addressed the disciples at Ephesus, “Have ye received the Holy Spirit, since ye believed?” their reply was, “We have not so much as heard, whether there be any Holy Spirit.”—Are we to infer, from their answer, that they had never heard of the existence of God? or that God was a Spirit, a Holy Spirit? Such an inference is not to be admitted. These disciples were, unquestionably, believers in the existence of one Supreme God, and that his existence was purely spiritual. But may we not reasonably infer, that they had never heard of the existence of any *Holy Spirit distinct from, but equal to the supreme God in power and glory?* This inference seems not only natural, but necessary. Had there been a Holy Spirit of this description, it cannot reasonably be questioned that they would have heard of it. May we not, then, from this consideration, safely conclude, that the apostles of our Lord knew of no Holy Spirit distinct from, and equal to God the Father?—The truth seems to be this—that the disciples at Ephesus had not so much as heard that *the Holy Spirit had been poured*

out in an extraordinary manner upon the apostles, or any other christians ; or that they had been endowed with *miraculous gifts*. That this is the real meaning of their answer to Paul's question, we have, I am persuaded, the clearest evidence. *To be endowed, then, with extraordinary gifts, is to receive the Holy Spirit.*

In this connection it seems pertinent to remark, that notwithstanding the Greek word *Pneuma*, translated *Spirit*, is sometimes used to denote the person of God, or God himself, yet its gender is *neuter*, and properly signifies a *thing* rather than a person. It is evidently used in an impersonal sense. The following passages furnish invincible proof of the truth of this fact. "The Spirit *itself* beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. 8. 16. This Spirit, or the disposition in us, or miraculous gifts which we have received from God, and by which we perform supernatural works, give testimony to our minds that we are the sons of God. "The Spirit *itself* maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. 8. 26. The Spirit of God maketh intercession for the saints, not as *a person* supplicating to God on their behalf, but as *an influence* directing and qualifying their supplications in a proper manner.—If I have given you the true meaning of these passages, as I think I have, we see the propriety of applying the neuter impersonal pronoun *itself* to the *Spirit*. But if the Spirit were strictly a person, would not the application of this pronoun to him be highly improper? It would be very unsuitable to say, the *Father itself* loveth you—the *Son* gave *itself* for me. As this pronoun is not used to denote personality, or a person, its application to the Spirit seems clearly to intimate, that the Spirit is *not a person*, but a *thing*, an *influence*, or *operation*.

It is pertinent to my purpose also to remark, that if the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, were a person, and distinct from God himself, it is but reasonable to believe that we should find expressions, in the Scriptures, of *mutual love between them*. But as we find no expressions of this sort, may we not safely infer, that the Holy Spirit is not a person distinct from the one God, the Father? The Scriptures furnish several expressions

of the strongest love and attachment in relation to the Father and the Son. "*The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*" "*The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things.*" John 8. 35, and 5. 20. "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" Matt. 3. 17, and 17. 5. "He received from God the Father glory and honour, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" 2 Pet. 1. 17. "The only begotten Son which is *in the bosom of the Father.*" John 1. 18.—Jesus Christ himself testifies that he is the object of *his Father's love*; and that *he also loves the Father*. And that he loved his Father with supreme affection, he clearly evinced in the whole course of his ministry. Hence we infer, that while he and his Father were *one in affection*, they were *two distinct persons or beings*. But if the *Holy Spirit were a person distinct from the Father*, is it not passing strange, and utterly unaccountable, that no expressions of mutual love *between them* should occur in any part of the Scriptures?

I observe once more in relation to this subject, that in the introductory addresses in the epistles of Paul, we find "grace," "mercy," and "peace," wished "from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;" but *nothing wished from the Holy Spirit*. In 2 Cor. 13, 14, the apostle indeed wishes the church of Corinth the communication, or the *participation* of the Holy Spirit. But this does not imply personality, or that the Holy Spirit is a person; but that the Corinthian church might all be partakers of, and enjoy in common divine gifts and endowments. Since then the apostle fervently wishes spiritual blessings and enjoyments to his christian brethren at Corinth, both *from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*, but *nothing from the Spirit*, it is fairly to be inferred, that the Holy Spirit is not a distinct person. This inference is also to be drawn from the consideration that no mention is made of the Holy Spirit, where all the inhabitants of "Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem," are distinctly enumerated. In this enumeration are comprised "an innumerable company of *angels*, the *general assembly*

and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, God the Judge of all, the spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." The Holy Spirit is omitted. But is not this omission perfectly unaccountable, on the supposition that the Holy Spirit is a person or being distinct from "God the Judge of all?"—Several other arguments might be employed in proof that the Holy Spirit is not a person distinct from God; but considering them as needless, they will not be particularly noticed.

I have endeavoured in this discourse, my brethren, to present satisfactory evidence to your view, 1st, that *Holy Spirit* is sometimes a *synonymy* for God himself—2d, that the supposition that the Holy Spirit is a *person distinct* from God, is *inconsistent* with his supposed supreme divinity—3d, that *Holy Spirit* is to be understood in *several different senses*.

Before we improve the subject, permit me to submit to your consideration a summary view of what seems to be the scripture doctrine of *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*. There is *one, and but one Supreme Being*, who is self-existent, independent, the most high, invisible God, the Father—of whom are all things, whose being, perfections and glory are infinite and unchangeable.

There is *one mediator* between God and man, *the Lord Jesus Christ*, by whom the Father has, in a very clear and impressive manner, made known his will to men for their guide and direction both as to faith and practice. Although the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, yet he was made flesh, that he might be touched with all the feelings of our infirmities, and that he might endure grievous sufferings, and submit to death, in behalf of sinful men. After dying, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, he arose again from the dead by the power of the Father, ascended up into heaven, where he ever liveth to make intercession for his people, and where he shall reign till all enemies shall be put under his feet, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all.

There is also *one Holy Spirit*, which, in the Scrip-

tures, is sometimes synonymous with God himself, and is sometimes synonymous with the supernatural influence of God, personified, or represented by a figure of speech as a person. But Holy Spirit is more generally a phrase of various import—signifying power, or power of God ; extraordinary gifts and qualifications ; constraining, or impelling influence ; good things of a spiritual nature, generally ; the Inspiration of God, &c.—By an

IMPROVEMENT,

We shall now close the subject.

1st. If the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God, is not a distinct person or being from God himself, it is evident, that *he is not an object of distinct worship or praise*. Is there, then, more than one Holy and Infinite Spirit ? To admit the existence of a plurality of such spirits or minds, would necessarily imply the existence of a plurality of infinite Gods ; for the phrase *Infinite God*, is perfectly synonymous with *Infinite Spirit*, or *Mind*. As the Holy Spirit, therefore, is the Spirit of God, the Supreme Father, and as God the Father is a Spirit, a Holy Spirit, and but *one* Spirit, it cannot be consistent with the unity of God to offer worship and praise to any *other* Spirit, as the Supreme Being. Nor can we offer worship and praise to any such supposed Spirit, without invading the inalienable rights of the One Supreme. *God* will not give his glory to another. Nor can *we*, my brethren, do this and be guiltless. I should with less confidence, and with less concern advance this sentiment, if the Scriptures furnished any reasonable evidence of the existence of more than one Supreme Spirit. But finding no such evidence in the inspired volume, the importance of the subject constrains me to say, and with deep concern, that to worship any Spirit, as a supreme object of worship, or to offer a tribute of praise to any such Spirit, as distinct from the One God, must be a *presumptuous dereliction of the honour and worship of the Supreme Father*. “God is a Spirit, and the true worshippers worship him, as *the Father*, in spirit and in truth ; for the

Father seeketh such to worship him.” As the *Father* seeketh such worshippers, so *we* presume not to seek any other Spirit than the Father alone, as the great and glorious object of our worship. By worshipping him alone as the one true and Supreme God, we conform both to scripture precept and example. We are required to worship the Lord our God, and to serve him *only*. But we are no where required in the word of God to worship the Holy Spirit, or his Spirit as an object or person distinct from himself. Nor have we any intimation in that blessed book, that either saints in heaven, or saints on earth, ever worshipped or acknowledged the Spirit of God as a person or being distinct from God himself. John, the beloved apostle, “beheld” in vision, “and heard every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, saying, blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.” He, who sitteth on the throne, is God the Father, and the Lamb is Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, to each of whom appropriate honour or worship is represented as offered, not only by all the holy inhabitants of heaven, but by the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea. But we find *no honour ascribed to the Holy Spirit, nor indeed any mention made of a Holy Spirit distinct from God*. We dare not, therefore, ascribe honour and praise to the *Holy Spirit*, as a person, or distinct object of worship.

2d. If the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, is not a person or being distinct from God the Father, and if Jesus Christ is a person or being inferior to the Father, as I have endeavoured to prove in this and the preceding discourse, *must not the scripture passages, employed to support the Trinitarian theory, be greatly perverted?* Whether this be in fact the case, you will judge for yourselves. The principal of these passages, with a few remarks upon them, I will submit to your consideration. “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Matt. 28. 19. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God.

and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." 2 Cor. 13, 14. "Grace be unto you and peace, from him, who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits, which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." Rev. 1. 4, 5. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one." 1 John 5. 7.

Aside from *these*, there are no passages, I believe, in the Bible on which Trinitarians place much dependence as furnishing evidence that God is three persons, or that three co-equal persons constitute one God. It is supposed that the passage quoted from Matt. 28, "proves the Son and Holy Spirit to be intelligent agents, equal with the Father, because they are here *associated* with him, and because they are represented as equally with him *the objects of supreme worship*." But is it true that this passage proves that the Son is an intelligent agent, *equal* with the Father? or that the Holy Spirit is an intelligent agent, either *equal*, or *inferior* to the Father? If Jesus Christ were equal with the Father, could he with any propriety have thus prefaced the commission he gave to his disciples, "all power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth?" As the power or authority which Christ exercised was given unto him, how could he have been a supreme and independent agent? Or, is it to be inferred that the Son and Spirit are, equally with the Father, *the objects of supreme worship*, because their names are *associated* with the name of the Father in the passage under consideration? But may it not with equal propriety be inferred, that elect angels are the objects of supreme worship? "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and *the elect angels*, that thou observe these things." Here angels are as *intimately* associated with God, as the Son and Spirit. But as this circumstance furnishes no proof that these angels are, equally with God, the objects of supreme worship, so neither does it prove that the Son and Spirit are objects of supreme worship.

Baptism does not, it is believed, imply an act of worship, in the strict sense of the word, much less an act of supreme worship. Did it imply this, must not the Jewish lawgiver be considered as an object of supreme worship? for many were "*baptized unto Moses* in a cloud and in the sea." But baptism *unto* Moses is equivalent to baptism *into* Moses, and probably implies precisely the same as baptism *in the name of* Moses. Why did the apostle Paul thank God that he had baptized none but Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanus? The reason was, lest it should be said that "he had baptized *in his own name*." But do you think that the apostle was apprehensive that he should have been considered as setting himself up as an object of *supreme worship*, had he baptized thousands? This cannot reasonably be supposed. Or had he baptized *professedly in his own name*, no one would have supposed that he intended any thing more than to found or establish a sect to be called his disciples, and to be distinguished by the name or title of *Paulites*. Unwilling that Christians should be distinguished by the name, and as the disciples "of Paul," "of Apollos," and "of Cephas," he rejoiced that he had given no occasion for these distinctions.

In the book of Acts, we read of persons being "baptized in," or into "*the name of the Lord Jesus*." But in the epistles of Paul, they are said simply to be baptized *into Christ*. To be baptized then into *the name of Christ*, is of the same import, as to be baptized *into Christ*. But does not the expression, "to be baptized *into Christ*," clearly signify that Christ is acknowledged as an *object of faith*? Does it not obviously imply, on the part of the person baptized, a belief in Jesus as the Messiah, and the doctrines which he taught, particularly those which relate to the Father, to himself, and to the Spirit? That this is indeed the truth, and that to be baptized *into Christ* is equivalent to being baptized *into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*, does not, I am persuaded, admit of reasonable doubt. To be baptized then *into* these three, or *into the names of* these three, signifies that *the persons thus baptized are believers in the great truths, contained in our holy re-*

ligion, and particularly those truths which more immediately relate to the *Father, the Son, and the Spirit*; or that they believe and acknowledge that the Christian religion originated with the *Father*, was revealed and taught by the *Son*, and was confirmed by the *Holy Spirit*, or the divine power by which *Jesus Christ* and the apostles wrought miracles in confirmation of the truth of the doctrines which they taught. This explication of the passage is perfectly natural, consistent, and, it is believed, scriptural. It comports with the views not only of Unitarian writers generally, but of some of the most distinguished Trinitarians. Nor does it, in any important point, disagree with any representation of the subject, which has come to my knowledge, in the early records of the Christian Church. In the constitutions of *Clemens*, which were written near to the apostolic age, baptism is said to be administered “in the name of the *Father who sent*, of the *Son who came*, and of the *Holy Spirit who bore witness*.” In another place of these constitutions it is said, that “mention is made of the *Father as the first author*; of the *Son, as sent by him*; and of the *Spirit, as bearing witness*.” And in a third place it is said, “we make known to you the Omnipotent God to be but one; besides whom there is no other. He alone is to be worshipped and adored, through *Jesus Christ our Lord*, and that in the *Holy Spirit*.” Many other passages from the writings of the early Christian Fathers might be quoted, similar to these, furnishing, I should think, invincible evidence, that the *baptizing text* under consideration was never understood, in the early periods of the Church, to imply that “the *Son and Holy Spirit* are intelligent agents, equal with the *Father*.” And that this is not the import of the passage, the current testimony of Scripture affords, it is believed, ample proof. We cannot therefore but believe, that our Trinitarian brethren, generally, (though not with design,) *greatly pervert* its obvious and legitimate meaning.

The passage, at the conclusion of St. Paul’s second epistle to the Corinthians, is much depended on as proof that “the *Son, and Holy Spirit*,” are intelligent agents, equal with the *Father*. “The grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." But we see not how St. Paul's benevolent wish to the Corinthian church can be made to support, or even favour this doctrine, but by grossly perverting its natural meaning. Does the passage admit of any other natural and consistent meaning than this, "May you enjoy the grace or favour of the Lord Jesus Christ—may you be, and continue to be, the objects of the approbation and love of God, the Father of Jesus Christ, and may you all partake of the Holy Spirit, or the gifts and holy dispositions, arising from the peculiar influence of God upon good men or true christians?" This seems to be the true import of the apostle's benevolent wish, or benediction. As "*the communion of the sufferings of Christ*" must unquestionably mean *a participation in his sufferings*, so the "*communion of the Spirit*" must signify *a participation in spiritual gifts and influences*. "We may enjoy a communion of gifts with persons, but a participation of a person is an idea, which cannot enter the mind" of any reasonable and unprejudiced man.

The supposed evidence from Rev. 1. 4, 5, in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, we do not see. The description, "He who is, and who was, and who is to come," designates the true and Supreme God, the Father, the fountain of all blessings, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." If, by "the seven spirits," who are said to be "before his throne," we are to understand the Spirit of God, and by the Spirit of God a person, this person must be considered as inferior to the Supreme God; for a person who stands *before* the throne, must surely be in a station inferior to Him, who is seated *on* the throne; and this *inferior station* must denote *inferiority of character*. But by many it is supposed that the *seven spirits* here mentioned, denote *seven angels*; because it was a received opinion that there were seven principal or superior angels waiting near the more immediate presence of God. But from what is said chap. 5 v. 6, where these spirits are represented as the *eyes of God*, may it not reasonably be inferred, that the *seven spirits* denote the *watchful providence of God*, which is, in a variety of ways, and universally exercised? Accord-

ing to this construction, we are to understand the apostle as wishing to the seven churches in Asia, favour and peace from God, *whose providence is over all, and whose operations are manifold?* But whatever may be the precise meaning of this difficult passage, it cannot, I think, be so construed as to favour the Trinitarian hypothesis, without being *greatly perverted*.

1 John 5. 7, I should have passed unnoticed, but from an apprehension that the omission might be attributed to a consciousness that the passage furnishes invincible proof in support of the doctrine of the trinity. “There are three that bear record in heaven, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.*” I am not unaware that much dependence is placed on this passage as proving “a trinity of co-equal persons in unity,” or that three co-equal persons constitute one God. But the attentive and unbiassed reader will perceive that these heavenly witnesses are *one only in consent of testimony*; or that they all agree in bearing the same testimony; for it is of a record or testimony that St. John is here speaking. And *to be one*, evidently signifies, to be one *in consent or agreement*, and not *an unity of nature*. It is the same here as if it had been said, *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit bear testimony of Christ*, as if they were but *one witness*, so perfectly do they agree and harmonize in bearing witness to him. This is confirmed beyond all reasonable doubt from the fact, that those texts of Scripture where *two or more persons* are said *to be one*, are evidently to be interpreted of their being *one in consent or harmony*. Considering the text as genuine, this interpretation is submitted as the only consistent interpretation that can be given it. It is not, however, to be disguised, that the words above quoted, which are in *Italics*, are supposed, by those who have carefully examined the subject, to be *spurious or interpolated*. This is decidedly the belief of, at least, some Trinitarian writers of the most distinguished eminence for deep research and for candour. In an article of the “*Eclectic Review*,” a learned periodical work, conducted by avowed Trinitarians, the following passage occurs with reference to this text—“We are unspeakably ashamed, that any modern divines should have contended for

retaining a passage *so indisputably spurious.*" Nor do any Trinitarian divines, it is believed, at the present day, "contend for retaining it," as containing the words of Inspiration, but those whose information respecting the subject is very considerably limited. Divines of this description do indeed not only contend for retaining it, but for an interpretation of it, which is a *gross perversion* of its natural and obvious meaning. But as *some* of our Trinitarian brethren, who are justly distinguished for learning and candour, reject the text as spurious, *we* will not contend for it as genuine.

3d. If the Holy Spirit is not a person distinct from God the Father, and if Jesus Christ is a person inferior to the Father, *the belief of the Trinitarian hypothesis must not only be a great error, but must tend to great evil.* Although it be conceded that erroneous opinions on religious subjects are not, in all cases, injurious in their tendencies or results ; yet it cannot be questioned that such opinions, in many instances, are in their consequences truly deplorable. Nor is the belief of the doctrine of three distinct and co-equal persons in one God the least likely, among erroneous opinions, to be productive of unhappy and evil effects.—That our christian brethren, who embrace this doctrine as essential to the christian system, should be disposed zealously to support it, excites no surprise. That they should believe their brethren who reject this doctrine to be in a dangerous situation, we do not wonder ; and that they should be desirous of reclaiming them from their supposed error, and to bring them into a state of safety, *might reasonably be expected* from their benevolent concern. But that they should, through an ardent and ill-directed zeal, occasion much evil ; that they should make their orthodoxy instrumental to the violation of the just rules of decency, of erecting unreasonable "jealousies, variance, hatred, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions," is very greatly to be lamented. That this zeal, with its *legitimate* and shocking consequences, should have existed in the times of gross ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism, is not to be accounted a strange thing. The times and results of this ignorance are to be winked at. But that the same things should exist, in so considerable a degree, in

this period of light, and of candour, is a subject of just surprise and deep regret.

By these remarks I would not be understood to insinuate that Trinitarians are universally chargeable with these unamiable and repulsive traits of character and conduct. From this charge there are exceptions; men distinguished for the mild and cheering radiance of their social, moral and christian virtues. But it is not to be disguised that the following charges, and charges of a similar nature, are, by many of them, made with application to unitarian christians, particularly unitarian ministers. "Certain men are *crept in unawares*, who *privily* bring in damnable heresies, denying the only Lord, and our Lord Jesus Christ—even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction—and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through coveteousness shall they with *feigned words* make merchandize of you, whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."—"The same spirit which speaketh expressly, speaketh *truly*, when he says that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils—speaking lies, (not openly) but in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with an hot iron.—These *certain men*, who bring in damnable heresies, deny the Lord that bought them, do it by *stealth*, *creeping in unawares*, and *privily*, and with *feigned words* and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, by which to serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, do through *coveteousness* make merchandize of the unwary. In putting these passages of scripture together, *I was never more forcibly struck with any thing in my life than WITH THE EXACT RESEMBLANCE which the description bears to the once disguised, but now unmasked unitarian clergy of these regions.*"—Let the trinitarian clergy then "institute a most systematic attack, by preaching among THESE BENIGHTED PEOPLE, wherever an opening offers. Let your mission to THESE REGIONS OF DARKNESS be as direct and systematic as your mission to the Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians." But

“ it is a difficult thing *to get at* these people ; for they are, in a large proportion, incased in *the seven fold steel of SELF CONCEIT.*”

This, my brethren, is but a specimen of the indecent and defamatory phillippicks vehemently uttered against unitarians. Is it possible that such a thing should have been conceived in *the first town* in MASSACHUSETTS, delivered in *the second*, and introduced to public view by the request of *a christian audience* ? Is all this, and much more, as well in *deeds* as in words, *the legitimate result of the trinitarian creed* ! Conduct like this might admit of some palliation, were unitarians justly chargeable with “ denying the Lord that bought them,” and with bringing in “ damnable heresies,” but instead of this they explicitly acknowledge him to be “ *both Lord and Christ.*” and that “ every tongue is to confess him *to be Lord* to the glory of God the Father.” They also acknowledge it to be a truth worthy of all acceptation, that *Spirit of God* expresses *Supreme Divinity*. Since then they are professedly the friends and advocates of these great and precious Bible truths, the abuse, as above stated, with which they are loaded, admits of no apology ; nor will any one, it is confidently believed, in whose character are united *the true gentleman and enlightened christian*, offer a syllable in its contradiction.

How evil, in its tendency and effects, must appear the trinitarian theory to every reflecting mind, when it will permit its zealous and bigotted advocates to exhibit so little either of the gentleman or the christian ? *This single circumstance* affords presumptive evidence that it descended not from above. Alas ! that the pure and peaceable spirit of our holy religion, which vaunteth not itself, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth in the truth, and doth not behave itself *unseemly*, should by many be so little understood ; so little cherished ; so little practised !

I have now, my brethren, exhibited to your view what appears to me the scripture doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and endeavoured to make it “ profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

In the preceding discourses I endeavoured to make a just and faithful exhibition of the character of the

Father, and of the Son, as represented by the unerring pen of Inspiration, and to make some appropriate and useful remarks.

As a concurrence of circumstances led me to think it my duty to express to you my sentiments on these great and interesting subjects in as clear and explicit a manner as possible, so I have endeavoured faithfully to discharge this difficult obligation, with a view to your best interest, and the glory of God, in the advancement of the cause of truth and of pure and undefiled religion.

Whatever may be the shades of difference between my present sentiments, and those which I entertained in years past, you will, I presume, do me the justice to say, that you have seldom, if ever, heard me censure and condemn the doctrines advocated in these sermons. You must be sensible, that in my public discourses I have generally used scripture language in relation to these subjects. This I have done from a conviction that the language of scripture is much more correct, lucid and intelligible than the words of man's device.

In discussing these subjects you cannot suppose that my object has been to acquire the praise of men, or any worldly advantage. Nor will you, I am persuaded, admit into your minds a suspicion that I have had the remotest design to lead you into error, or that it has been my object, from a litigious spirit, to oppose the sentiments, or to wound the feelings of my christian brethren.

That I might commend myself to every man's reason and conscience in the sight of God, it has been my object to avoid the hidden things of dishonesty, a crafty and deceitful handling of the word of God, and to govern my views, my feelings, my words, and my manner by the meekness of wisdom. Nor have I been desirous that you should receive any sentiments I have advanced as true, without carefully testing them by the infallible standard, the word of God.—For the interested and candid attention you have given to these discourses, you are entitled to my grateful and warm acknowledgements. They are sincerely tendered you, accompanied with my ardent wishes and fervent prayers that you may be made wise by their instrumentality unto salvation.

Permit me now, my brethren, to ask—Does not *the unity* of the Supreme Being, in *the person of God the Father*, appear to your understandings to be the doctrine of the Bible? Does not this doctrine, which ascribes necessary, and self existence, every possible perfection, and absolute supremacy and invariableness to the Father, as the one God, and which supposes that all the persons or beings are dependent on him for their existence, and all the powers of their existence. “Does not this doctrine” appear as *rational* as it is *scriptural*? How simple, and intelligible, when compared with the trinitarian hypothesis of three infinite persons or agents in God!

Does it not appear in the highest degree probable from *analogy*, the *nature of things*, and *especially* from *scripture testimony*, that but *one* intelligent nature, soul or spirit is to be ascribed to Jesus Christ? Must he not, therefore, in *his whole nature or person*, have performed the work of mediation between God and men? Although he was a Son, the beloved Son of God; the express image of his person, yet he suffered—he learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and being thus made perfect, he became the author, or medium of eternal salvation, unto all them that obey him.—To know Jesus Christ and him crucified, according to this plain and intelligible representation, in the most effectual means of escaping *the pollutions of the world, and of obtaining freedom from a state of bondage*. These pollutions we are to escape “through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;” and this freedom is to be obtained through “the knowledge of the truth,” as it is in Jesus. This doctrine not only relieves the mind from that perplexity and confusion which are inseparable from the trinitarian theory, but exhibits a steady and uniform object of supreme worship, even God the Father, whose glory is reflected from “the face of Jesus Christ,” the mediator. It also directs us to one spirit, or *divine energy*, on which we are to depend for a disposition, or heart to “worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”

In this mediatory doctrine or dispensation, how wonderful does the love of God the Father appear! how

passing knowledge the love of Christ his only begotten Son ! A dispensation by, or in the hands of a mediator, necessarily implies more than one person or party besides the mediator himself. “ A mediator is not a mediator of *one* ; but God is *one*.” Thus, as if it had been foreseen, that the unity of God would be denied, scripture testimony is careful to guard against the belief of a plurality of gods, or a plurality of supreme persons.

Mediation must respect parties, aside from him who mediates ; and these parties must be intelligent persons. One party to whom the mediator stands related is the human race, or sinners, who are *many persons*. The other party is God the Father, who is but one—*one person*. Between these parties or persons, Jesus Christ is the “ one mediator,” who is a *person equally distinct from both parties*. He is “ our peace.” By him, those who “ were afar off are made nigh, and reconciled unto God.” And it is “ through him that we have access by one spirit unto the Father.”

How astonishingly are displayed the wisdom, the goodness, and the love of God by the provision which he has made for the salvation of sinners in the person of the one mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ; through the agency of the Holy Spirit ! How wonderful also appears the benevolence and love of Christ in undertaking and faithfully performing the difficult and painful office of mediator, that rebellious sinners—his enemies, and the enemies of his Father, might be raised from the depth of infamy to the height of glory ; from the abyss of misery to regions of happiness ; from the mire of sin to the purity of holiness ; from dreary darkness to cheering light and everlasting day ! How great is this salvation ! Glory to God in the highest that it is an attainable blessing through the mediation of his Son : and glory to Jesus Christ as the great and wonderful medium of this precious salvation.—That we all may happily be sharers in it, let it be our great concern to form right conceptions of *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*, and to exercise and cherish *correspondent affections of heart*.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. AMEN.

SERMON IV.

THE AWAKENER.

MATTHEW, 26. 45. *Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, sleep on now, and take your rest.*

A LITTLE before his crucifixion, Jesus Christ repaired with his disciples “unto a place called Gethsemane,” where he directed them to remain, while he should “go and pray,” at a little distance, accompanied by only Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, whom he expressly required to “watch with him.” Being “exceeding sorrowful,” he “went a little farther and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Having thus poured out his holy and troubled soul to his Father in fervent prayer, he returned back to Peter and the two other disciples; and finding them asleep, he addressed Peter in this monitory and gentle manner—“What! could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”

“He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again; for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.”—Here the passage of the text is introduced. “Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, sleep on now, and take your rest.”

What are we to understand, my brethren, by this address of our Saviour to his disciples?—that it approved of their conduct in sleeping, on so interesting and solemn occasion, or countenanced and encouraged them to continue in a sleeping posture? This cannot reasonably be admitted, as Jesus had required them to *watch*, while he should be engaged in prayer. Besides, in the verse immediately following the text, he thus addresses them—“*Rise, let us be going; behold he is at hand that doth betray me.*”

But if our Saviour did not intend to be understood as approving the conduct of his disciples, and as encouraging them to indulge in sleep, why should he have expressed himself as in the text, *Sleep on and take your rest?* May we not reasonably suppose that he thus addressed his disciples with the view to give *peculiar force* to admonition, and *edge* to reproof?

When one thing is said, and another evidently intended, information or reproof is conveyed with more impressive force, and pungency of application. This mode of expression is called *irony*. A very striking instance of it occurs in the address of Elijah to the prophets of Baal. After they had for a long time cried to this imaginary deity to answer them “by fire,” but in vain, “Elijah mocked them and said, Cry aloud, for he is a god, either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.”—Could the prophet in any other way have so forcibly conveyed the idea that *Baal was not a god*, and that he existed only in the imagination of his credulous and infatuated worshippers?

Another striking instance of ironical address is that of the wise man to young persons.—“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.” What mode of address is better adapted to arrest the attention, alarm the fears, and to dissuade thoughtless youth from the pursuit of vain amusements, contaminating pleasures, and the destructive entanglements of vice?

Several other instances of irony occur in the sacred

O ye votaries of Bacchus ! neglect not the reasonable and elevated service of this your God. His service is delightful freedom—glorious liberty ! It requires of you no self denial—no cross. It is perfectly suited to the inclination and relish of your hearts. To neglect then so easy and pleasant a service would evince, at once, the most consummate folly and ingratitude. How perceptibly do your devotions to this “rosy divinity” contribute to the strength and vigour of your constitutions ; to the energy of your minds ; to the health of your bodies ; to the generous sensibilities of your hearts ; and to the sublime and refined enjoyments of your intellectual natures ! By the inspiration of this potent deity, you instantly become learned politicians, deep historians, profound philosophers, skilful jurists, intrepid heroes, able divines, sceptred kings, and mighty emperors.

Should others, viewing your superior talents and noble conduct through a false and unfavorable medium, be led unhappily to estimate your characters as vile, debased and contemptible ; should they through this sad mistake contemplate your situation with emotions of pity and pungent grief ; should their compassion for you convert their “heads to waters, and their eyes into fountains of tears ;” should their anxiety for your souls make them to sigh, and cry, in prayer to God that he would have mercy upon you, and pluck you as brands from the burning ; should they entreat you to watch and be sober, and enforce their entreaty by every consideration adapted to alarm your fears, to awaken compunction, and to dissuade you from your glorious career—stop your ears ; close up every avenue to conviction ; disregard their tears ; pity their weakness, and resist their entreaties. Are you to be influenced by the effects of spleen, austerity and ignorance, while in your own estimation, which is unquestionably correct, you are “more wise, more learned, more just, more every thing,” than seven men who can render a reason ?

Be it so, that in the paroxysms of your sublime and enrapturing inspirations you are often the terror of your wives, your children, and other connexions ; that they

shrink abashed at the majesty of your appearance ; that they feel the effects and wear the marks of your bachanalian prowess ; that you reduce them to poverty and distress—have you not a right to do as you will with your own ? Are you not the sovereign lords and masters of your wives and children ? Is it not your duty to establish your authority over them, and to reduce them to a proper state of subjection ? Besides, are you not under obligation to deny them fulness of bread, and such other indulgences as would endanger their morals ? By constraining them thus to take up the cross, you will be likely to make them humble, and secure their best, their everlasting interest.

Are your wives and children to question your authority, or remonstrate against your conduct ? Are you to listen to their injudicious advice and hearken to their unreasonable entreaties ? Shall they oppose your will or attempt to restrain you from doing what is right in your own eyes ? Were you to submit to all this, you would abandon your just rights ; relinquish your inalienable authority, and introduce into your families anarchy and confusion. *It must never be.* You must, therefore, however painful the task, turn a deaf ear to the cries, the prayers and entreaties of your wives, your children and your misguided and obtrusive friends. Let none of these things move you ; let not one spark of *womanish* pity or affection enkindle in your *manly* breasts. Remember this, and shew yourselves men—men of great and noble, and magnanimous, and independent minds. Thus spurn at all controul ; thus secure to yourselves a name and a praise never to be forgotten.

Is it needful, my hearers, in this connexion to remind you *generally*, that it is as well your duty, as the part of wisdom, to make no effort to check the torrent of intemperance, which, with violent impetuosity, pours through our streets ? If the language of general conduct, may be considered as a just interpreter of public opinion, I have little or no occasion to admonish you in reference to the course you are to pursue with respect to this subject. If not directly and with design, yet as

volume. Since then the Spirit of God dictated this mode of speech, it cannot reasonably be deemed improper in the publick teachers of religion to use it, in relation to the most serious subjects, and on the most solemn occasions. May I not, therefore, presume that my hearers will not object to an address, designed for their best interest, in an ironical style.

Should the following discourse, in any parts of it, be considered as pointedly applied, one of its objects will be secured. Although to offend is far from my wish and design; yet it is both my design and wish that the discourse might be considered and felt as pointed at every individual, to whom it will justly apply. Whatever may be the apprehension excited in your minds by this remark, you will permit me to say that I am painfully apprehensive myself that the application of the discourse will be too general to find its way so directly, and with so good effect to any individual as his character and situation demand. I pray you, my hearers, to consider me as saying to each of you in the monitory address which I am about to make, "*thou,*" in a greater or less degree, "*art the man.*"

Although the passage under consideration refers to *natural sleep*, and bodily repose, it may, it is believed, with propriety be accommodated to *moral sleep*, which consists in supineness, indolence, stupidity of soul. To this kind of sleep, then, I shall apply *the text* in the following discourse, earnestly entreating you to apply *the discourse*, so far as it will apply, to yourselves individually. Nor shall I be unmindful, I hope, to make due application of it to myself.

Is it not, my brethren, a very humiliating, serious, and alarming truth, that we are but too generally in a slumbering state; and that many of us are in deep, and dead sleep? What can be more indicative of this, than the languor of religious zeal, the laxity of morals, the neglect of religious duties, and the prevalence of vicious habits, which so strongly mark our general character? These are considerations for deep regret, alarming reflection and profound humility. Who, but finds abundant occasion with the man after God's own heart

to exclaim, "I beheld the transgressors and was grieved." "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they kept not thy law." "The floods of ungodly men make me afraid."—What is to be done to arouse sinners from their profound and deathlike sleep? "Their heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and God should heal them." What mean ye, O sleepers? Arise, call upon God, that ye perish not. But why should I call upon you to awake? *Me* you will not hear; for you refuse to hear *him*, who speaketh in the most awakening and impressive manner from heaven.—Are you then *determined*, my hearers,—are any of you determined *not to awake*, or be awakened, but to sink from a sound, into a sounder sleep? "*Sleep on*" then "*and take your rest.*" Let not the awful flames of Sinai's burning mount, nor its tremendous peals of thunder, disturb your repose. Dream of peace and safety—that "you are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing," that you may, fearless of danger, eat, drink, and be merry; that without concern, you may "cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God;" that without hesitation, you may treat with neglect and contempt the most sacred truths and solemn subjects, as idle tales; that you may ridicule the joys of heaven and the pains of hell, as imaginary things; that you may live without God and without Christ in the world, in full and certain hope that death will be an everlasting sleep. Neither fear God, nor regard man. *How excellent thus to live! How desirable thus to die!*

Who are more soundly asleep among us than they "*who are mighty to drink wine, and mingle strong drink?*" How pleasant and delicious, as well as profound, is the sleep which has fallen upon them? To such, the recommendation, "sleep on and take your rest," may be thought needless, as their propensity to this habit seems invincible. But as they may be disposed to act by *the rule of contraries*, I will, as the most likely means to arouse, urge them to sleep on.

you generally, though, perhaps, in “expressive silence,” countenance and encourage the progress of intemperance, it is to be presumed that your conduct is the result of prudent deliberation, and conviction of duty. It is not to be supposed that the great majority in any community, and especially a Christian community, can be wrong in speculation and practice, in relation to this subject.—Why is the vote of the majority in deliberative, or other assemblies, considered as more weighty than the vote of the minority, and allowed to have decisive influence? Is it not because the majority are supposed to possess more discernment and wisdom, and to act on better principles than the minority? Is it not reasonable then to infer, that, as the majority among us and around us, rather favour, than discountenance a free and abundant use of ardent spirits, it is the part of prudence and wisdom to advocate and encourage the practice?—That the majority really act this prudent and wise part, cannot reasonably be questioned, when it is considered that the practice under consideration might be easily suppressed—at least, greatly checked, were the majority sincerely desirous of its suppression, and determined to suppress it. Nothing but this determination, accompanied with suitable exertion, is necessary to effect such a revolution in the public opinion as would soon terminate in the general disuse of ardent spirits, or the use of them, in a very moderate degree. As then this determination does not exist, and this exertion is not made, and as the majority must be supposed to think and act right, is not the inference necessary and unavoidable, that any attempt to check and suppress the practice of intemperance, is to be considered as unreasonable, unwise, unjust? Besides, who can reasonably pretend that he has a just claim to be his brother’s, or neighbour’s keeper; to interfere with another’s concerns, or to circumscribe his liberty and freedom? Is not every man to act according to the result of his own judgment? But does not every man, who makes a free and liberal use of ardent spirits, do what he thinks to be right, and conducive to his health and comfort? Where is there a man or *woman* among

us and around us, who habitually uses a greater quantity of ardent spirits, than is necessary to his or her health and comfort? Should it be conceded that individuals sometimes drink a *little more* than is necessary, yet this is not to be charged to their account either as a sin, or disgrace, as they do not allow themselves ever to exceed the limits of prudence and moderation. Every man must be allowed to judge for himself, as to the quantity necessary to his health and comfort. The man who daily consumes a *quart* of rum, gin, or brandy, no more exceeds the bounds of temperance, than the man who consumes but half, or a *tenth part* of that quantity. The latter obtains his object, *comfort*, and *needful recruit of nature*; and the former does but obtain the same object. This is the plea. But is it not to be admitted as good and sufficient, as well in *the one case* as in *the other*? Each must judge for himself. Each is best qualified to judge for himself. Must it not then be impertinent to question the correctness of any man's judgment with respect to what is necessary for his own comfort and benefit!

But should it be urged that a free and copious use of ardent spirits, brings a man to poverty, clothes him with rags, and reduces him to a state of dependence upon the community for support; that this is already the situation of a considerable number, and is likely to be the situation of many more, unless a speedy stop should be put to their intemperate career; and therefore, that intemperance is an evil both to the public and to individuals—Should this be urged, the answer is ready—The poor we always have; and it is necessary that we should have them. Were it otherwise, we should have little, or no opportunity for the exercise and gratification of compassionate and benevolent affections in contributing to the support of needy objects. As the exercise of these affections is the brightest trait in the christian character, we ought to be very thankful that we have among us so many objects of charity, as this circumstance is highly favourable to improvement in christian virtue.

Should it further be urged, as a reason for the suppression of intemperance, that it brings many strong

men to an untimely grave ; that these men must be considered as suicides or self-murderers, and, therefore, as plunging themselves into the abyss of hell, we have only to observe, that it was not in our power to controul their destiny, and therefore, that we cannot be accountable for the manner in which they lived, or for the condition in which they died.

But should it be said that drunkards must be in a state of profound moral sleep, and that, for their benefit, we ought to make every possible exertion to awake them, we reply, that no exertion would be available to this purpose. Why then should we labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought and in vain ? To attempt an impossibility, is the part of madness. Should it, however, be admitted that these sleepers might be aroused from their sleep by the instrumentality of energetic means, does it follow that these means ought to be used ? Were drunkards effectually awaked from their deep and deathlike sleep, what would be the consequence but bitter regret, deep remorse, and inexpressible anguish to their souls ? But who, that is possessed of kind and benevolent feelings of heart, would be willing to arouse his fellow-beings from the sweet elysium of sleep, to realize a hell of horror in their awakened minds, and accusing consciences ? Let these sleepers then sleep on and take their rest. Let them dream of peace and safety, of joy and of glory, without disturbance or interruption.

Nor let those, *who give unbridled license to their tongues*, arouse from their sleep of moral security.—As persons in rational sleep speak, sometimes, in the most extravagant, incoherent and unlicensed manner, so it is with those who are in a state of moral sleep. No man, who is not in a profound sleep, would set his mouth against the heavens, and speak stout words against the Almighty ; invoke damnation upon himself, or “ deal damnation round ” upon others. Nor would any man, morally awake, allow himself to practice lying, prevarication and deceit, slander and abuse, against his fellow-men. Conduct, like this, to such a man, would, in the highest degree, be repulsive and abhorrent. And were he at any time to be guilty of it, how exquisite must be his compunction and remorse ! If any among us then al-

low to their tongues this unbridled license, how profound must be the sleep into which they are fallen ! But shall we attempt to awake them from their rest, to sorrow, bitter regret, and anguish of spirit ? Shall we not rather advise them to sleep on in repose and unconcern—to belch from their mouths the most fearful oaths, and the most horrid and blasphemous language, and magnanimously dare the vengeance of Almighty God ? How effectually, in this way, my *respected friends*, will you show yourselves to be men, men of exalted minds, of good breeding—accomplished gentlemen ! How effectually will you manifest your heroism ; your courage ; the greatness of your souls, and your noble independence.

By lying, prevarication, and deceit, you will give scope to the superior energies of your genius, and the adroitness of your mental powers. You will realize consummate satisfaction in reflecting, that by your excellent art and address, you have imposed upon, and outwitted your weak and credulous neighbours, disappointed their expectations, deranged their plans, and reduced them to a state of perplexity and distress. How delicious is this feast of wit, and flow of triumph ? Nor need you be apprehensive of detection in your triumphant career. But should you be detected, yet you are not to apprehend that any disgrace or infamy will be attached to your character, as you will be so far from standing alone, that you will find yourselves in the broad road with the multitude, who will not fail to countenance and support you. If, however, the majority should not side with you, and if your reputation should suffer injury in the public estimation, the injury would be more than compensated by the satisfaction you would derive from reflecting on the ingenuity, which so long preserved you from detection. By the practice of slander and abusive language against your neighbours, you will have not only the high satisfaction of wounding their most tender sensibilities, and of fixing perhaps an indelible blot upon their reputation, which they hold dearer than life, but of showing to the world that your own characters are so good, and so well established, that you are under no apprehension your neighbours can, or dare speak evil of you.

How enviable is the happiness of these licentious sleepers ! But as their happiness depends on the continuance of their sleep, how unreasonable—how inhuman would it be to arouse them, by thundering into their ears an awakening alarm ? Who, then, that is possessed of the “tender charities,” but will advise them to sleep on and take their rest.

Are any of you so sound asleep with *respect to integrity and uprightness in your principles and conduct, as to have little or no regard for simple honesty, and upright dealing, in your intercourse with your neighbours ?* Continue then to sleep on, as you would hope for composure, self satisfaction, and rest. Were you thoroughly to awake, your delightful dreams would be converted into deep and stinging reproaches. From a state of high self exaltation, you would sink, in your own eyes, into a state of contempt ; your consciences would cut you to the heart ; your present peace would be destroyed, and your situation would be like that of “the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt ;” and dreadful would be your forebodings of the retribution of divine justice. How shocking to be in a situation like this ! As then you would avoid this terrible evil, be careful to guard against a strict and impartial examination of the principles of justice ; keep out of sight our Saviour’s golden rule ; let conscience suggest no scruples when you have an opportunity to make a *good bargain*, or overreach your honest and unsuspecting neighbour. Remember that charity begins at home ; that it is your duty to provide, *in the most effectual way*, for yourselves and your own households ; that if you were to become rigidly honest, you would so far depart from common custom, as essentially to injure your own property, and of course to do injustice to yourselves and families. Pursue then your present course, and your rest in sleep will suffer little or no interruption. Only lay aside scruples of conscience, and you may be assured that your repose in sleep will be sound, quiet and undisturbed.

Are any of you in so sound a sleep as to *cast off fear and restrain prayer before God ?* Is the family sacri-

be neglected in the most of your dwellings? And yet does God threaten to pour out his fury upon those that call not upon his name? Is this an alarming—a startling consideration? Sleep on then and take your rest. Why should you be alarmed and live in fear? All fear hath torment. And the fear, which this threatening, if duly regarded, would awaken, would render you inexpressibly wretched. But can it be your duty to bring yourselves into this deplorable situation, by regarding the supposed threatened fury of God? Has not God declared “fury is not in me?” And is he not a Being of infinite benevolence and mercy? Does he not *will* that all men shall be saved? *The fury* of God, therefore, must mean *his tender mercy*, and *his threatening* is to be understood as a *gracious promise*. You have, therefore, no occasion of fear, that the God of love will inflict upon you any pain or penalty for your neglect of prayer. How unreasonable and unwise were it then to torment yourselves with fear and dread, in relation to this subject—a subject to which none attend unless their minds are strongly tinctured with superstition, and awed by foolish terrors.

But as it is possible, my tranquil and *rational* friends, that your speculations and feelings with respect to this subject would undergo a thorough and painful revolution, were you to awake from your sleep, let me earnestly entreat you to guard against this evil. Let your sleep be sound. Dream of hope and confidence in the divine mercy; and that, although you habitually neglect to pray for it, you will safely “arrive at the Zion above, with songs and everlasting joy upon your heads.”

Are many of you fallen into so deep a sleep as to disregard the divine command, “*Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy?*” Do you allowedly neglect to assemble yourselves together, on the christian sabbath, to unite in the solemnities of religion? Do you suffer slight inconveniences and trivial occurrences to detain your feet from the house where “prayer is wont to be made?” Do you permit vain thoughts to occupy your minds; unsanctified affections, your hearts; trifling and loose conversation to employ your tongues, and other works than those of mercy to occupy your hands?

After this manner, my hearers, do you violate the Lord's day? But is this consistent with a wakeful state of mind? Were you awake, this your irreverent conduct would occasion you painful alarm and distressing anxiety. If then you would avoid these unwelcome and disagreeable visitants, indulge in oblivious sleep. Let no consideration, however tremendous, awake you from your deep repose. How unwise would be your conduct, were you to exchange the sweetness of sleeping repose, for the bitterness of waking sorrow?

How many of you have hitherto so slumbered and slept, as *practically to disregard the institutions of our holy religion, baptism and the Lord's supper?* The greater part of you have never "named the name of Christ;" and by far the greater part of you have, to the present time, turned your backs upon the sacramental supper, and practically said, that "the table of the Lord is contemptible." But does your disregard of these institutions occasion you little or no uneasiness and solicitude of mind? And are you desirous to continue in a state of tranquillity and unconcern with respect to these subjects? Continue then to sleep on. Persuade yourselves to believe that these institutions are of little or no importance, and that it is perfectly indifferent either to regard or neglect them. Consider the Institutor of them as having no authority over you—as having no claim to your obedience. Consider his declaration, "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," as implying that you may as well be saved without faith and baptism as with these qualifications. Disregard the invitation he has given you to the feast which he has provided, that you might not neglect more important concerns; your "pieces of ground," your "oxen," your "wives,"—your worldly concerns generally; remembering, that "if any man provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—Contemplate the many sorrows, the exquisite sufferings, and the bitter and ignominious death of Christ, in your behalf, with cold indifference—with tranquil apathy, and thankless unconcern. Unless you thus sleep on, you are to expect no peace or rest. Were you

awakened to see your conduct in relation to these institutions in the light of truth, so great would be the painful conflict in your breasts. that literal sleep would not easily visit your eyes, nor slumber your eye-lids. You would "travail with pain," and "a dreadful sound would be in your ears." As then a continuance in your present sleep is necessary to preserve you from these dreadful woes, you will not hesitate to sleep on and take your rest.

I pause—With deep solicitude I cast my inquiring eyes upon the assembly—Can I discover any symptoms of wakefulness? Have you heard the *serious* advice I have given you? Have you understood it? Has it made any impression upon your minds! Has it aroused a single soul from the sleep of death! Do you not still plead, "yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep?" What more then shall I say to you? In what manner shall I address you? Shall I change *the mode* of my address, and speak to you without a figure, in plain, affectionate and solemn language! But if what I have already said has failed to produce the desired effect, I can say nothing, I fear, which will be effectual. I will however make the attempt, with "my heart's desire and prayer to God," that while I speak to your ears, he will be pleased mercifully to speak to your consciences, and to your hearts.

Let me address you, and each of you, as did the mariners the sleeping prophet—"What meanest thou, O sleeper! Arise! call upon thy God, that thou perish not."—O sleeping sinners! Arouse from your heavy and guilty slumbers. Open your eyes, I most earnestly entreat you, to see the unreasonableness and the folly of your conduct. Let conscience faithfully do its office, and let your hearts be affected with penitential and pungent sorrow.

Consider, I beseech you, *how flagrant must be your guilt—how horrible and presumptuous must be your sin* in trampling under your feet the authority of Almighty God, and in hardening your hearts against his fear and love—against all the overtures of his mercy, and the denunciations of his violated law. Consider

these things and be confounded. And O, be persuaded to abhor yourselves, repenting as in dust and ashes.

Consider, I beg of you, *the danger of your situation*. While you walk contrary unto God, he will walk contrary unto you, set his face against you, and shut up his bowels of compassion from you. Remaining in a state of moral sleep, you must remain under sentence of condemnation, the wrath of God must abide upon you, and continually must you be exposed to indignation and wrath, tribulations and anguish, where peace and hope can never come. O, sleeping sinners! Is this a situation in which you can, with stupid unconcern, persuade yourselves to remain? O, how alarming is your situation! How imminent is your danger! The avenger of blood is at your heels! Flee then for your lives; look not behind you, but hasten with the utmost speed to the city of refuge.

Cease immediately to do evil, and learn to do well. Abandon, totally abandon, the fascinating cup of intemperance. Never raise it again to your lips to swallow its deadly poison. "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babblings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?" who degrade themselves below the beasts that perish? who bring themselves to an untimely grave, and rush unprepared into the presence of God? "They who tarry long at the wine, who are mighty to mingle strong drink." Let me then entreat those of you of this description, and let not my entreaty lie in vain—
 "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. Shut your eyes against the tempting appearance of strong drink, wherein is excess. Resort not to the places where it has allured multitudes to destruction. Avoid them; pass not by them; turn from them and pass away." Harken. Earnestly beseech you, to this counsel, for it is *your life*. As you would hope to see many and good days; as you desire to be esteemed as men—as rational beings; as you would reasonably expect to secure the divine approbation, and escape the damnation of hell, be persuaded to *desist without delay, and entirely*, from your pernicious and destructive course.

If you *parley* with the subject, and attempt but a *partial* reformation, *you are lost*—I fear, *irrecoverably* lost. O, that you were wise to know, and to do the things which belong to your peace, your happiness, your eternal salvation.

O ye, who vilely abuse the glory of your frame, that little member, the tongue, *let me prevail with you to lay upon it a strong and salutary restraint*. As you would make any pretension to a character above the most base and contemptible of the human species, let your tongues be no more prostituted to shame and vile dishonour. Venerate that holy and tremendous Name, which you have so often blasphemed. Let it never pass from your lips but with the deepest awe and reverence. “Swear not at all.” “Speak the truth in love.” “Speak evil of no man.” Let every species of slander and defamation be your abhorrence. Let your habitual “speech be grave, seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” Speak often one to another on subjects which will tend to edification, and to the security of your everlasting well being, in the reward of glory, honour and immortality. O, think not that words are indifferent things; but be assured that “for every idle word you shall speak, you must give an account thereof on the day of judgment; for by your words grace shall be justified or condemned.”

O ye, who cast off fear and restrain prayer before God! *Let me prevail with you no longer to live as without God and without Christ in the world*. Let the most reasonable and important of your obligations be no longer neglected. Suffer not yourselves to be deluded with the supposition that a prayerless state of heart is consistent with the christian character, or that a spirit of true devotion will never influence the tongue to pray. Prayer is, if I may so speak, the spiritual life of the christian, and necessary, as well to the sustentation, as to the health of that life in the soul. Nor without the exercise of prayer on earth, are you to expect to unite in songs of praise in heaven. Let me then urgently beseech you, as you would hope for the approbation of God here, and the everlasting enjoyment

of him hereafter, to commence a life of prayer. Lift up holy hearts and pure hands, to him who heareth prayer. Pray in faith. Pray in the name of Christ.—Pray with importunity and without ceasing. Pray with all prayer. Nor let those of you, who are heads of families, be unmindful of social devotion. Without delay let the family altar be united in all your dwellings, and let the morning and the evening sacrifice of prayer and of praise regularly ascend from it, like grateful incense to heaven. Let the resolution of Israel's leader be yours, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." O, that every house in this place might immediately become a Bethel, a house of prayer.

Permit me, with importunity, and with success, to *entreat you to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."* Let it be your delight. Esteem it as honourable. Let it be cheerfully consecrated to the service of Almighty God, both in public and in private. On no consideration, but of unavoidable necessity, neglect to assemble on this blessed day to discharge its appropriate and interesting duties. As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so let your souls pant after God, that you might always be disposed to come and appear before him in his holy temple, to see his glory, and to worship him in the beauty of holiness. How can you expect to unite hereafter in the more sublime and delightful services of God's temple above, if you do not highly prize and delight in the services of this his earthly temple?

Let me, once more, pressingly, and to good effect, importune you *to turn your serious and interested attention to the precious institutions of our holy religion, baptism and the sacramental supper.* Alas, my hearers, how many of you treat these divine institutes, apparently, with unfeeling indifference, and astonishing neglect! How can you thus despise and reject the blessed Saviour, the friend of sinners! Then, and not till then, are you to consider yourselves as his faithful disciples, when you are disposed to do whatever he commands you. Alarming consideration! Seriously attend to it, and receive salutary instruction. If you love Jesus Christ, why do you not keep his command-

ments, *all* his commandments ! Why are you not solicitous to hear his precious name named upon you in baptisms ? Why do you not long for the pleasant and nutritious feast of fat things which he has kindly provided ? Why tarry ye ? Arise and be baptised, washing your sins, that you may go on your way rejoicing. Come to the feast—O be persuaded to come, for all things are ready. “The spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is” hungry and “athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him come,” and eat of the bread, and drink of the wine which wisdom hath prepared. O, that you would listen to, and thankfully accept the merciful invitation, and not harden your hearts. “Now is an accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” O that in your day you would effectually know the things which belong to your present and future peace and happiness. “Hear, and your souls shall live.” “See that you refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh in heaven.”

O ye, who are wise Virgins ! Are not ye, who should always be wakeful, in a slumbering posture ? How long will ye indulge in drowsiness ? *Let me beseech you not to sleep as do others ; but to watch and be sober.* Is it not time—*high time*, to arouse from your guilty slumbers ? Awake, awake ! Arise from the dust—put on your beautiful garments—put on strength—adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things—make your light shine with a clear, mild and conspicuous lustre. For Zion’s sake hold not your peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake do not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

ERRATA

Page 9, line 6, from the top, for compounded, read uncompounded.

—12, —9, from bottom, for reprehensions, read reprehension.

—21, —4, from bottom, for have, read has.

—32, —5, from bottom, for seem, read seems.

—44, —3, from top, after not, insert then.

—91, —9, from bottom, for creeting, read existing.

—93, —18, from bottom, for contradiction, read vindication.

—95, —8, from top, erase *the*—line 17, from bottom, for in, read *in*.

—107, —12, from bottom, for rational, read natural.

—113, —14, from bottom, for lie, read be.

—114, —17, from bottom, for grace, read you.

—115, —7, from top, for united, read erected.

—116, —2, from top, for hear, read have—3 line from top, for baptisms, read baptism.

